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I BRING YOU LEAVES.
BY PIERRE ST. JULIAN.
I bring you leaves of many a hue,
Idle leaves from a summer zone,
Yet not quite dead, for they speak to you
In a language sad as ead as true—
Of a bleeding heart, a life forlorn.
I bring you leaves as yellow as gold,
I pray you read each silent leaf,
Till they tell to you the tale they told
When I gathered them up, so damp and cold,
From where they fell in their silent grief.
I bring you leaves, magenta and red,
All pencilled with flakes of Autumn sheen,
And crimsoned with hopes that long since fled
A heart that beats as if made of lead.
Yet once was light as the leaves, I ween.
I bring you leaves of purple and dan,
Ah, dying leaves, is it sad to know
Each like you win from a summer's sun
Will but prove him false, as one by one
You seek a grave in the Winter's snow?
I bring you leaves from the forest trees,
And with them leaves from fugitive years;
Will you accept them? Yes, even these?
For they are only the bitter lees
I found in my cup of scalding tears.

ONE-ARMED ALF,
The Giant Hunter of the Great Lakes;
OR,
THE MAID OF MICHIGAN.
A ROMANCE OF THE WAR OF 1812.
BY OLL COOMES.
AUTHOR OF "DEATH NOTCH," "BOY SPY," "OLD SOLD-
IERY," "HAWKEYE HARRY," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.
THE MEETING IN THE FOREST.
THE sun of a summer day, of the year of 1812,
had long since risen, sending its warmth to the
very roots of the great trees, when a human voice
was heard in the depth of the wilderness some ten
leagues east of where the Muskegon river pays
tribute to the vast expanse of Lake Michigan: not
a savage war-whoop nor a cry of distress, but a
call which was immediately answered from a
point not far distant. The call was that of an
Indian who stood in a little open area, or glade,
surrounded by tall trees and walked in beneath
a with a dense growth of underbrush. He was a
chief of the Ojibwas, as the peculiarities of his
dress and application of the various colored pig-
ments upon his face denoted—a tall, athletic-
looking fellow in the very prime of a vigorous
life. His shoulders were broad and massive; his
chest deep and swelling, and his limbs well-pro-
portioned and muscular. His swarthy features
were thoroughly Indian, subtle and cunning in
expression. His small black eyes, glittering like
beads of fire, were full of the vindictive craft of
his race, while the thin lips and broad, flat nose
with dilated nostrils, showed a predominance of
energy and passion.

His majestic form was wrapped in a blanket of
English manufacture, and its cleanliness was indi-
cative of its newness. In his girdle hung a toma-
hawk and scalping-knife, while he stood leaning
upon a rifle, which was also of English manu-
facture, and was evidently a new acquisition to
the chief's private arsenal.
The glade wherein this Ojibway stood, this, how-
ever, was trampled down and partially dead,
while here and there were the remnants of recent
camp-fires. There were three or four narrow
passages through the surrounding thicket con-
verging there, and upon these paths the Indian
kept a close, keen watch as if he were expecting
some one.

As the moments wore away into minutes he
started suddenly, when he heard a slight rustle in
the undergrowth along one of the passages; and
then a light of satisfaction kindled in his black,
glittering eyes when he caught the flash of some-
thing red among the foliage. A moment later a
white man dressed in the scarlet uniform of a
British officer, stepped into the opening before
him.

This second person was a man of about forty
years, whose bloated face and bloodshot eyes told
of a life of dissipation; and the hard lines about
his eyes and mouth betrayed a wicked, unscrupu-
lous character. His small, round, rosy cheeks,
lieutenant of infantry, though he had no regular
command, having been commissioned by the king
for past services among the Indians.

"Waugh!" ejaculated the Indian, as he entered
the opening, "English chief come at last—Black
Bird been here ever since sun look over the trees."
"Yes, yes, red-skin," replied the officer. "I
heard your call several minutes ago, and answer-
ed it at once. Where are the other chiefs?"

"They come soon—ugh! Big Elk come now."
The English lieutenant turned and saw the
chief referred to entering the opening. He was im-
mediately followed by another and still another,
until not less than a dozen chiefs were assembled.
Each was the head sachem, or representative of
the different northern tribes, both north and
south of the Great Lakes; and was armed with a
new rifle and wrapped in a new blanket—all of
English supply, and strong proof of deep machina-
tions on the part of the British crown.

That they were there by appointment, was evi-
dent from the circumstances under which they
met, as well as the presence of the English officer
there in that isolated spot of the great wilder-
ness.

Having kindly and cordially welcomed the ar-
rival of the last chief in his smooth, bland way,
Lieutenant Ensign Macklogan seated himself
upon the ground in true Indian style, and drew
from his pocket a handsomely-ornamented pipe,
which he proceeded to load and light.
While he was thus engaged, the chiefs, follow-
ing his example, seated themselves in a circle up-
on the grass, when Macklogan announced that
the pipe of peace would be passed around, after
which ceremony they would enter into a solemn
pow-wow.

The seal of Indian friendship was first passed
from Macklogan to Black Bird, who took a few
whiffs and passed it to the next. In this manner
it passed from one to another, until it again came
into the hands of the white man.



The Giant Hunter and his hound.

Black Bird now arose, and with solemn dignity,
announced the great council open, to which he
added:

"Chiefs and brothers of the great Ojibwas,
Ottawas, Pottawatomes, Hurons and Chippewas,
the war-chief of our father across the great
salt lake has called us here in council. Each of
you carry a new rifle and a new blanket, but
where did you get them? Our Canada father
gave them to us, and he has promised us many
more. He has sent his war-chief to meet us here
and give us the news from his people. Let us
hearken while he speaks."

Black Bird sat down, and Lieutenant Mack-
logan arose and began his speech. As he pro-
ceeded, his low, dark brows became knitted and
the spirit of evil was visible upon every lineament
of his repulsive, bloated face. He was
smooth-tongued and deceitful, and had long been
one of the mercenary tools of the British in
America, employed to use his diplomatic powers
toward our people. He was at heart a bad
man, and all the evil of his soul cropped out upon
his features and in his language, quite naturally.
Before he had proceeded far with his speech,
however, he was suddenly interrupted by the ap-
pearance of a new-comer, whose presence caused
his face to brighten, and his eyes to sparkle with
an eager, anxious light, despite the murmur of
indignation that passed from the lips of the as-
sembled chiefs.

CHAPTER II.
THE RUM-TRADER.

THE intruder was a white man well-known to
the Indians and Macklogan as Whisky Mug, a
name contracted from Jabez Muggins, and an odd
specimen of humanity he was, his very presence
evidencing a spirit of mirth. He was about forty
years of age, short, thick and heavy set. His
face was broad and beardless; his eyes keen,
bright and sparkling; and his mouth large, yet
wreathed in a quaint, comical smile. Withal,
Jabez Muggins was a rough-looking individual,
yet the personification of a free-and-easy good-na-
turedness that was not in harmony with his sur-
roundings. He was dressed in a garb, half-civil-
ized and half-savage, and wore an old coon-skin
cap from which the fur had all been worn off un-
til the crown glittered like a bald spot, giving him
an appearance as odd and quaint as an old Teu-
tonic professor.

He possessed no weapons of any kind, but at his
back he carried a small wooden keg by means of
straps attached to each end of the vessel, and
passing over the left shoulder and under the right
arm. To this strap was attached, by means of a
buck-skin string, a small tin cup of antiquated ap-
pearance.

As he entered the glade, the whisky-trader
seemed greatly surprised at the presence of the
council.

"What brings you here, you old sot?" exclam-
ed Macklogan, in apparent anger.

"What brings me?" replied the whisky-trader;
"why, my legs in course, Mack; but, I'll be

smashed into thunderations, if I knowed you
hippocorum of the peninsula was tucked in yere
no, I jist sild in to count my loss and gain, and
take a chunk of a sleep; but I'll be hugged to
death by the poorest leeches square on the pint, if
I arn't in luck, for I know you're all dryer than
fish a million leagues from water."

As he thus spoke Muggins removed his leg
from his back, and placing it upon the ground,
seated himself upon it; then crossing his short
legs, and folding his arms over his breast, regard-
ed the councilors with a look of comical indiffer-
ence.

"Do you know, Whisky Mug," asked the En-
glishman, "that your wares are liable to confiscation?"

"Confiscation? Wherefore, Mack? Expostulate
a little," demanded the trader, with a quizzical
grin.

"You are an intruder on sacred ground—so to
speak; you are within the council-lodge of the
great Indian tribes of the north."

"Scat!" drawled the whisky-trader, with a
chuckle; "you're spoutin' now, lieutenant. Even
if you have met to confab over your affairs and
sich, arn't I the guidin'-star of yer joy—yer
guardian angel, come with light and sunshine and
joy and liquid intelligence plugged up here in ole
Knowledge-Box?"

No saying, the whisky-trader sprung to his feet,
and, with a business-like whistle, proceeded to
draw a cup of whisky. This done, he drank the
liquor himself, permitting it to gurgle down his
throat in a manner intended to whet the thirst of
the Indians; and was soon engaged in dealing out
whisky to the councilors, drinking about every
fifth cupful himself. One drain, however, only
served to sharpen the Indians' inordinate love for
the liquor, and so the second and third drinks
were called for and dealt out, the trader contin-
uing to take his intermediate potations; so that by
the time the third drink was completed, his hand
began to tremble and his voice to thicken.

The Indians were just beginning to feel the ef-
fect of their potations when the fourth was called
for; but, to their surprise and regret, they found
that the trader had fallen into his old habit of
drinking twice to every man's once, thereby get-
ting so beastly drunk that he had failed to close
the faucet, and let the remnants of the whisky
run out upon the ground, while he fell backward
upon the grass in his drunken stupor.

"See here, Whisky Mug," cried Macklogan,
"you shall not sleep here; get up and begone at
once."

"Durned if I do (hie) Britisher," muttered the
trader, with a drunken leer, "fur I've (hie) done
the fair thing by you (hie) drunken dogs—ho,
what a gal—arious (hie) Injun summer's this—all's
hazy's a dream; and oh, (hie) how the trees 're
dancin'—lek I'd ole ole oak (hie) up sides and
down middle there, (hie) Mack—"

And the trader sunk heavily to the earth in a
drunken sleep, but, with an oath, Macklogan
gave him a kick with his booted foot and succeed-
ed in arousing him again.

"See here, Muggins," he said, "you must either
leave her, or swear by the Great Spirit that—"

"Durned if I do," muttered the trader; "I
don't swear (hie) by the Great Spirit—swear by
Popo-cattypetle's burnin' moutin' (hie) so I do;
so you durned hippo—(hie) can go on with yer
rat-killin' and let me slum'er sweetly (hie)."

The whisky-trader sank into a deep slumber,
from which he could not be aroused, but the oc-
casional delirious starts and cries, which seemed
to throw him into convulsions almost, were suf-
ficient evidence of his total prostration, which
would, perhaps, last for hours.

The councilors, however, had not imbibed so
deeply as to lose sight of the object of their meet-
ing, and when Macklogan had assured himself
that no liquor remained in the cask, he called the
chiefs' attention and continued the speech so ab-
ruptly broken off by the whisky-trader.

By his specious promises of all necessary aid
from the British crown, and his incendiary false-
hoods regarding the objects of the Yankees in
prosecuting a war with Great Britain, he well
succeeded in arousing the wildest passions of the
assembled chiefs, and elicited from Black Bird
the following reply:

"The words of our white brother have sunk
deep in our hearts. We are ready to strike the
blow that will free our land forever. We have
waited for this time to come. When the new
moon has come then will the Ojibwas, the Ota-
was, the Hurons, the Pottawatomes and the
Chippewas be gathered together in the forests of
Michigan. Mackinaw must fall; then we will
sweep southward and take many scalps upon the
Muskegon and Kilmazoo. The Spirit of the
Woods, too, must be destroyed, for his victims are
many, and he fills the heart of the red-man with
terror."

"Who is the Spirit of the Wilderness, Black
Bird?" interrupted Macklogan.

"No one knows. He is an enemy that has
never been seen. He shoots down our people
when they go alone into the forest to hunt the
deer. The crack of his rifle has often been heard,
yet his footsteps have never been found. He
shoots our warriors through the heart with a bul-
let so small that its track can scarcely be found."

"He's some white hunter or avenger I dare
say," said Macklogan, "some Yankee scout."

"We have not seen nor heard of any white
avenger. There is but one white man outside of
the Muskegon settlement on these hunting-
grounds, and him the Great Spirit has smitten with
a sad heart and misfortune. His right hand the
Great Spirit kept back when he gave him life
that it might not be raised against the red-man."

"What's his name, Black Bird?" asked Mack-
logan.

"One Arm, Injun call him. One-Armed Alf,
his black servant call him."

Macklogan started up, and, fixing a keen,
startled glance upon Black Bird, asked:

"Are you sure he is called One-Armed Alf?"

"Yes—I know it—I see him many times—
he live in log-cabin down on Muskegon."

"Then do not trust to his pretended friendship,
Black Bird," replied Macklogan; "he may be a
secret spy and enemy watching all our movements
—yea, he may be the Spirit of the Wilderness!"

"Waugh!" ejaculated Black Bird, with an air
that implied his disbelief, "he can not strike—
he carries no weapons—no gun—no tomahawk—
nothing."

"That may all be, Black Bird," replied Mack-
logan, "but watch him; the Yanges are all sly
and treacherous."

"He no enemy, but, if the hatchet is to be dug
up between the red-man and the Yanges, the
scalp of One Arm will count in our victories.
But already the sun is sinking, and Black Bird
and his friends have a long way to go to reach
their lodges. Let the chief of our Canada brothers
go back and say that Black Bird and all his
friends will be ready to strike at Mackinaw when
two more suns have set."

"I will bear your message to your friends in
Canada," replied the Englishman, "and I will
tell them to have belts of wampum and more
new rifles and blankets for you when you come."
A grim smile of satisfaction passed over the
swarthy features of the circle of savage chief-
tains; then each one in turn reiterated his prom-
ise to march with his warriors forthwith upon
Mackinaw.

The object of their meeting being thus settled,
the councilors prepared for their departure. This
required but a moment, and as they fled away
in different directions into the forest, each one
cast a longing, regretful look at the empty keg of
the whisky-trader.

For some time after their departure the drunk-
en trader lay in his profound sleep, now and then
tossing about and muttering in a delirious, inco-
herent tone. But, at length, he began to recover
slowly from his debauch, and when he was able
he arose to a sitting posture, and, rubbing his
eyes to clear them of the hazy mist that dimmed
them, muttered:

"Whoop tee doodle, whoop tee doo, and whar
are ye now, Jabez, ole tiger? Surely not 'n wil-
derness of Judea nor desert of Salharah. No, no,
I swear by Popocattypetle's fire that you're 'n
middle place; but, you've been takin' a drunk,
you beast. First thing you know you'll wake up
and find yourself dander than a nit—but oh! I
know now whar I be, and I wonder whar them
red skinfints and that ole rusty-coated 'Clogan
hev gone? Wouldn't care a durn if they'd gone
down to the sulphur-diggin's, but they never
chalked over the rinktums for them 'ere spasms.
Mebby, tho, they'll do it some time with interest,
so I mout as well pint my ole red nose to 'rds
Whisky Korner and feed ole Knowledge with
more inspiration."

With quite an effort he staggered to his feet,
and then, securing his whisky-keg, he managed to
slung it upon his back; then reeled away across
the glade and disappeared in the undergrowth.

In leaving the glade Black Bird, accompanied
by two of the chiefs, moved away in the direction
taken by Macklogan, who had preceded them in
his departure. The three chiefs moved in silence,
like so many grim phantoms, and had journeyed
more than two miles from the council-ground,
when a low cry suddenly escaped the forward
chief's lips and he came to an abrupt halt.

A few rods in advance they saw Lieutenant
Macklogan seated upon the ground, leaning
against the trunk of a tree, apparently asleep, or
engaged in mental reflections. His attitude was
one of ease and repose, yet his presence there so
soon after the recent interview in the glade, and
under existing circumstances, excited their
amazement.

For full a minute the chiefs gazed, first at the
resolvent form of the British officer, then in
among the shifting shadows around them.

Then with cautious footsteps they approached
the officer. He stirred not as they drew nearer
him. Was he asleep? Yes; and soundly, too,
for Black Bird approached him and spoke, but
the Englishman did not stir.

Then the chiefs' keen eye detected a dark, wet
spot upon the left breast of the officer's scarlet
coat. Closer examination revealed the startling
fact that it was blood! It came from a wound
beneath Macklogan's head, and the expression
of pain and agony frozen upon his face, told that
he was stone dead!

The discovery of this startling fact seemed to
fill the breasts of the chiefs with new terror, and,
in trembling tones, Black Bird exclaimed:

"Our white friend is dead. A bullet has
pierced his heart. The Spirit of the Woods is
abroad. He slew our friend; he is upon our
trail—come."

Without further words the three terrified In-
dians turned and glided into the woods, leaving
the body of their late friend reclining there by
the great oak in death's repose.

CHAPTER III.
ONE-ARMED ALF, THE GIANT SCOUT.

NEARLY, or quite three leagues from the east-
ern shore of Lake Michigan, a small, stout-built
log-cabin stood solitary and alone, surrounded by
the deep, dense shadows of a mighty forest. At
the foot of the eminence upon which the struc-
ture stood the sluggish waters of the Muskegon
river crept onward to pay tribute to the broad
waters of Michigan. Away upon all sides the
great wildwood stretched its dark, green bosom,
here and there diversified with great and small
water-courses, and dimpled with tiny lakes.

The cabin was strongly built of hewn logs, and
was the only evidence of civilization in the fore-
st, for miles around. On the outer walls of the
cabin were numerous skins stretched to dry; and
these, with other evidences to be seen about, was
sufficient proof of the cabin being the home of
some bold, fearless trapper. And for a white
man to live there alone, unmolested by the wary
red-man, was also proof of the existence of
friendly relations between them. No loophole
pierced the wall of the cabin, nor were there any
defensive measures visible about the place.

Let us enter that lonely cabin and see who its
occupant is. As we cross the threshold we are
greeted in a friendly manner by a single indi-
vidual, a negro. This ebony son of Ethiopia was
about five and thirty years of age, and in stature
was about the average size, although his limbs
and features were somewhat rough and angular.
His hair was jet black, short, crisp and curly,
and his eyes were large, and, in fact, the most
prominent feature of the man, if we except the

double row of white ivory teeth that were constantly displayed.

It is on the day succeeding the events narrated in the preceding chapters, and although he was alone, it was evident from his nervous movements and anxious, expectant glances out into the forest, that he was looking for some one at the time.

The truth of this was soon established when the figure of a white man suddenly emerged from the forest shadows and approached the cabin, followed by a large, sleek deerhound. He was a man whose very presence was calculated to command the attention, respect and admiration of a stranger, not only from the power of his physique, but all the attributes that go to make up a model of perfect manhood, physical and intellectual. He was not over thirty years of age and appeared even younger. In stature he was far above the average height, standing almost seven feet in his moccasins. His form was built in proportion to his light and bony evidence of prodigious muscular and physical power; and the lightness of his footsteps and grace of movements told of his supple pliancy and activity.

His hair was dark, though streaked with a few threads of silver, and hung in straight tresses down about his shoulders. His face was smoothly shaven, showing the full expression of the bronzed features, that were not unpleasing. His eyes were of a dark-gray color and gleamed in expression, yet there was a strange, vacant look in them which revealed a hidden, burning fire away down in his great heart. In fact, there was a sad, silent and clouded look upon the whole face. This man could have been neither a trapper nor hermit, depending on his own efforts for sustenance, for a single fact—his right arm was gone! And still another fact, corroborating that of his not being a hunter, was that of his carrying no firearms of any kind; neither was he habited in a borderman's costume, but wore a peculiar kind of suit made of moccasins and dyed the color of the forest leaves. Even the slouched hat and buckskin leggings, and moccasins were of the same color; and his partiality for this particular hue must have been engendered from the desire to evade discovery by hostile eyes through contrast of colors, when journeying among the green shrubbery and foliage of the forest.

We say he was unarmed; yet he did carry a heavy, knobby cane with a crooked head and brass ferrule on the end, which might have been a dangerous weapon if skillfully handled; still, it would have been of no use there against wild savages, wild beasts and gnawing hunger.

With rapid strides this giant stranger crossed the narrow opening and approached the cabin door. When the latter was reached, he opened it without ceremony and entered the building, his hand stopping without and stretching himself on the ground near the door with his own characteristic familiarity.

"Ho de good deliberance!" cried the negro, as the man entered the door; "you's come at last, Mas'r Alf! What you's been gone dis ebbin' lastin' time dat's been more'n a million years to dis nigger?"

"Why, Ethiopie, what's the matter?" asked the white man, in a cool, calm tone, while a faint smile played about his mouth.

"De matter?" Ethiopie fairly shrieked; "why, man, jist as sure as your name's One-Armed Alf, de debil's to pay—I swar to de natural system, he am. Why, mas'r, don't you tink dar's a big war declared across de whole United States ob North America and all creation. Mackinaw's to be 'bacted to-morrow, by a hundred million redskins, and den don't you tink de good-fur-nothings scamps an' givins to march on Point Michigan?"

"Is this a fact, Ethiopie?" asked One-Armed Alf.

"I'll jist be busted into a gob of nothing if it ain't so, Mas'r Alf. I swar it's so. Why, de 'Merican General, like Hull, wid a switchin' big pile ob sojer men, an' over in Canada now, jist making Ing'ling har and British fur fly like de dirt from de heels ob a race-hoss. I swar he am!"

"Indeed, indeed," said the giant, in a thoughtful mood, fixing his eyes upon the floor, "this is no more than I have long anticipated. The English have long been provoking us to extreme measures, and are preparing, and have been for some time, for war. I detected this in a strange movement among the Indians which I know was originated by British emissaries. The new rifles and blankets lately placed in the hands of the red-men attest this. And so the war has really begun! The Point, you say, is threatened after the capture of Mackinaw?"

"Dat's de program; now, an' dar's work for you now, mas'r."

"And how am I to work?"

"I—ow!" screamed Ethiopie, with apparent surprise; "havin' you got jist as good legs as de mosest or an' you 'fared ob de Spirit ob de Woods?"

"I have the same limbs I always had, Ethiopie, with the single exception of an arm."

"I am afraid of the Spirit of the Woods, because I do not believe there is such an avenger, but there are over a hundred Indians at this very moment watching my cabin and movements."

"Oh, my! oh, me! oh, Lor!" cried Ethiopie, in sudden terror, his eyes growing larger, his lips parting, and his whole face assuming a serio-comical expression; "if dat's de truth, and Ethiopie, den dis poor black chile's days an' 'bout figured out, and I never spoke a prayer in all my born life. Oh, I see it, mas'r! I'm a lost nigger, bound for total extinction and destruction."

"We may have to fight for our lives, Ethiopie, before night," said the scout, solemnly.

"Fight! dis poor black nigger, chile fight? Oh, Mas'r Alf! den dar's not a gun in de shanty, nor nuffin but dis chile's banjo and de meat-knife. Ki, yi! it am awful circumstance, Mas'r Alf. It'll be death in de dust disgrace; but den jist let a red nigger ob an' Injin show his head yer and I'll wade into him, tooth and nail, foot and fist, in a slap-past war!"

"I will inaugurate no war with the red-skins, Ethiopie," replied One-Armed Alf, "but I must manage some way or other to get word to the garrison at Mackinaw of the intended attack upon the place, and I must do it without leaving this vicinity, else my mission here in this country will be at an end."

"Roarin' jingoes, Mas'r Alf! How de Samhille ye govin' to 'kempish de ting, if de conduct ob de Ing'lings mean hostilities? Dis nigger wants light on de subject."

"Will you do me a favor?" asked the scout.

"Now dat—dat beats all git-out, Mas'r Alf. Why, boy, ain't I been doin' favors for you dis thousand years, now say?"

"I want you to take," continued the scout, in a low tone, "the bucket and go down to the river for water. On your return, in climbing the bank among those young hickories, pluck off a dozen or more of the largest green leaves and bring them to me."

"Lor save me!" cried the negro, in perplexity, "what does de man mean? But dar's no use talkin', so I'll jist run down and bring de water, and moseby a few leaves I'll fall into de bucket as I come up 'mong de hickories."

The negro companion and housekeeper of the scout took a bucket and departed on his mission. He was gone some time, but finally returned with the water and a number of green leaves. He had scarcely placed the bucket in its accustomed place, when a light footstep was heard at the door behind. Both the scout and negro turned, and to their surprise and horror, saw a powerful savage warrior standing in the doorway,

while in the yard behind him, others could be seen drawn up in front of the open door!

CHAPTER IV. THE CABIN GUESTS.

ALTHOUGH surprised by the Indian's silent, unceremonious intrusion, One-Armed Alf welcomed him there with a well-affected air of cordiality, although he felt that the red-skin's presence there at that time boded no good.

"How do, One Arm and Thunder Cloud?" the Indian replied to the scout's welcome, in disjointed English.

"Well, as usual, Gray Hawk," replied the scout; "you and your braves are welcome to the wigwam of One Arm."

The chief crossed the threshold to the opposite side of the cabin and seated himself upon the ground, his warriors following his example with a silent, sullen demeanor.

"Spect One Arm surprised to see us come," the chief said.

"I admit I am both surprised and pleased, Gray Hawk, for you have never visited me in all the time I have been here."

"Come to talk with One Arm."

"I am glad of it, chief," said the scout, seating himself on a stool before his visitors.

"Dese One Arm know Canada father and Indian fight Yangsee?"

"I have heard it intimated that there is to be a war, though I hope the rumor will prove to have no foundation of truth."

"All so—there be big war—many scalps will be taken."

"I am sorry—very sorry to hear it, Gray Hawk, for I had hopes that our people would never be arrayed against each other in battle again."

"How One Arm fight if have war?"

"The chief put the question so plain and emphatic that there was no chance for evasion, although it had been the aim of the scout from the beginning of the conversation to do so."

"How?" he repeated; "why, Gray Hawk, how could I fight?"

"No fight with gun or tomahawk, but fight with heart," replied the chief.

From this the scout saw what the chief was endeavoring to come at. He was testing the scale upon which the sympathies of the white man hung in the coming struggle. How to avert a direct answer was now the question. A falsehood he knew would only evoke suspicion on the part of his keen-sighted questioner, and an avowal of sympathies contrary to his own might place his life, as well as that of Ethiopie, in imminent danger.

"How do you think my sympathies are, Gray Hawk?" he asked.

"Don't think any thing—One Arm much quiet—no fight-man—no talk much—all still."

"Then why not let me remain so?"

"Goes good heart in time of war help Indian heap much."

"Then suppose I tell you I am neutral—that is, I will take no part on either side in the coming war."

"White man jist like Indian. He can't look with open eyes and not see when two deer before him. Then if he want kill deer, he must decide clear before he shoot which one he want—he can't kill both. Same with heart. He must take sides with Canada father or Yangsee."

"I wish neither of them harm, Gray Hawk. Both have been friends to me. I live upon the land of the Yankees, as you call my people, and would it be right to steel my heart against them?"

The brow of the chief seemed to lower like a thunder-cloud. He saw that the Giant Scout had no desire to turn even in sympathy against his people; and the evil that arose in the Indian's heart could be plainly traced upon his broad, sensual face. The scout read it all, yet he permitted no look nor word to betray the emotions of fear it engendered.

There was a brief silence, during which the scout saw Gray Hawk steal a quick, furtive glance around him and at his warriors. Then he said:

"Then I have One Arm's answer?"

"Yes, I desire to remain neutral, Gray Hawk."

Without adding another word the chief arose, and calmly folding his blanket about his shoulders, turned, and with a sullen brow, walked out of the cabin and away into the forest, followed by his warriors.

When they were out of sight and hearing, the scout turned to Ethiopie and said:

"Ethiopie, I am afraid we are in danger. That Indian means to do us some mischief, and I propose to follow him and see what course he pursues."

"Oh, my good salvation!" cried the African; "what's to be the end ob all dis mortal distraction? And you's givins out, Mas'r Alf! Now, do be keeful, boy, for if den red-headed niggers git hands on you, dey kill you in de slipp-slappet way."

The Giant Scout took his long, heavy cane from the corner where he had deposited it and left the cabin. He entered the woods at a point directly opposite the course taken by the Indians.

It was all of an hour before he came back, but, when he did, his face wore an expression of relief, and his footstep was lighter. Entering his cabin, he seated himself before a rude table, and taking the green leaves brought in by Ethiopie, he carefully arranged them, one upon another, in a pile before him. This done, he took a sharp-pointed instrument and proceeded to puncture them, following a certain defined mark.

When he had completed his task, he emptied the previously-filled bucket of its contents, and threw the punctured leaves into it. Then turning to Ethiopie, he said:

"Ethiopie, I want you to go down to the river for another bucket of water. In dipping it up, manage to let these leaves float out on the water so that they will reach the current and be carried down the river."

Without a moment's delay, the black man took the bucket and started for the river. His foot steps being quickened by some intuitive fear, he soon reached the stream, and having followed his master's directions in regard to the leaves, filled his pail and started on his return to the cabin. While hurrying along, his mind filled with strange thoughts, his attention was suddenly arrested by sight of a trail where some heavy body had been dragged across his path. The grass and leaves had been dragged up, showing that it had been recently made, not, however, since the negro had passed the point going down to the river, for he saw where he had crossed it. Upon careful examination the darky, whose fears seemed to have given way to curiosity, began a careful examination of the trail, and found that it was stained here and there with clots of blood. This discovery brought the negro to a sudden halt, but permitting his eyes to follow on in the direction which he knew, by the trail, the body had been dragged, he saw where the trail ended, a sight that forced a cry of horror from his lips. The body of an Indian was seated upon the ground, and leaning against the trunk of a tree in a cramped, listless manner, which, of itself, told that he was dead.

Growing still bolder through curiosity, Ethiopie now advanced to the body. He saw that the Indian had been shot. The warm blood was still oozing from a tiny bullet-hole in the left breast across which the crimson tide left a dark, coagulated track as it trickled down. But, the most astounding of all, was the discovery that the dead Indian was the recent visitor at the cabin, Gray Hawk, the Ojibway chief!

Hastening on to the cabin, Ethiopie dashed into

the presence of the scout, apparently terrified by what he had seen.

"Why, Ethiopie, what does all this mean?"

"Oh, my good Lor! salvation, Mas'r Alf," he cried, "I seed as awful a sight as ebbin' I seen in all my days."

"What was it, Ethiopie, what was it?"

"What was it? Oh! oh! I tell you, Mas'r Alf, it war a dead Ing'ling; and I see jist gwine to pull up stakes and leave dis section ob de world and shin out fur Pint Michigan. I won't lib here and keep house for you a bit more."

"Why?"

"Casse de Spirit ob de Wilderness am about. He killed dat Ing'ling."

"Did you know the Indian?"

"Know him? To be sure I knows him! He war dat confumigated brat, Gray Hawk."

"Heavens!" exclaimed the Giant Scout, "Gray Hawk dead and so close to my home! Curse upon the Spirit of the Wilderness! It has placed its victim at my door, and we'll have to answer for it, Ethiopie. Again I say, curses upon the Spirit of the Wilderness!"

(To be continued.)

Gentleman George:

OR,
PARLOR, PRISON, STAGE AND STREET.

A STRANGE ROMANCE OF NEW YORK LIFE.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN.
AUTHOR OF "THE MAN FROM TEXAS," "MAD DETECTIVE," "ROCKY MOUNTAIN BOB," "WOLF DEMON," "OVERLAND KIT," "RED MAKEP," "ACE OF SPADES," "HEART OF FIRE," ETC.

CHAPTER XII. THE WORKINGMAN.

CHRISTOPHER WALEBONE was a man of sixty, a heavily-built, gray-haired, pie-eyed man, with a fat, unmeaning face, always untidy-looking in his appearance, despite the care of his two daughters; his necktie was never properly adjusted, and his frowsy pepper-and-salt suit hung, baglike, upon him.

A decided character was the "hard-handed workingman," as Walebone delighted to call himself.

Staggering up the street with uncertain steps, returning from his accustomed haunt, the corner liquor store, Walebone beheld his daughter and the young fishman seated so cozily together upon the coal-box of the Dutch groceryman. He at once paused in his untidy progress and lifted both eyes and hands to heaven as if appealing for the clouds to fall and hide the terrible sight from his view.

The girl regarded the movement in dismay. That pantomime revealed to her the state of her father's mind as plainly as though he had expressed his ideas in words.

"Oh, run, Billy!" she exclaimed, nervously; "father don't like to see you here, I know!"

"Nary run," responded the courageous young fishman. "I ain't afraid of the old snoozer, if he is your dad. I might as well check it out now as any other time."

Then Walebone, who had halted a dozen yards or so away, looked around him for a moment as if in search of something, and a moment after lifted his nose high in the air as if inspired by intense disgust.

"Oh, how it smells of fish!" he cried, in a loud and sonorous voice, as though he was addressing his remarks to a crowd assembled in the street and utterly ignoring the two who sat on the coal-box, side by side. "Oh, how it does smell of fish," he repeated; "of fish that are not fresh, and whose rankness smells to heaven. Bah!"

The blood of Billy West boiled in his veins; the stubby hair on his tightly-cropped head rose in indignation, and it is more than probable that if the girl had not pressed the hand of her lover within her own soft palm, the indignant fishman would have "gone" for the aged Walebone, there and then.

After he had relieved his mind, Walebone advanced, as he came close to the door of the house, he pretended to see the couple on the coal-box for the first time. Immediately he straightened himself up and bowed with stately dignity to West, a salutation which that gentleman returned in a very sulky manner.

"If my eyes do not deceive me, I have the pleasure of beholding my esteemed friend, Mr. West," Walebone said, with stolid dignity—"a merchant in the fish trade. Ah, Mr. West, you do not visit my humble mansion often enough. Why do you not let us see more of you?"

"Oh, Willy, we have missed you!"

Considering that the young fishman visited the lively daughter of the house of Walebone seven nights a week, on the average, it will be seen that the stern parent of the fishman's love spoke sarcastically.

But, when it came to chopping, Jack was as good as his master, and Billy West had not been brought up among the fish-boys of Fulton Market for nothing.

"I'm very much obliged to you, I'm sure, Mr. Walebone," Billy retorted, with a great deal of mock respect; "but the fact is, I'm kept so busy at my trade that I don't have much time to make calls in, but hereafter I'll try to come and see you oftener, and I feel very much obliged to you for your kind invitation."

Walebone gazed at the two for a moment, with a stolid face, supporting himself by holding on to the doorway with one hand; he was not so much under the influence of liquor as not to understand that he had gotten the worst of the first bout.

Artemisia, eldest and fairest bud now left of the Walebone stock, I have been thinking of making you a present," said the old man, slowly and ponderously. "You have ever been a dutiful daughter and you have always obeyed your father's lightest wish in regard to the company you keep."

More sarcasm on the part of the aged Walebone, which made Billy grind his teeth, and fervently wish that he could give the old soaker one lick "for luck."

"You have always obeyed your father," repeated the old man, "your poor, aged, worked-out father, who is but as a worn trodden on by the foot of the world—who is a down-trodden workingman, not a bloated aristocrat, not even a wealthy fish-merchant," (another touch at Billy), "but he is an honest man; though his coat is ragged, it covers the heart of a nobleman. I am a mechanic. I do not blush to own it—I am a mechanic!" and Walebone gesticulated wildly with one hand; he had sense enough left to know that if he tried it with the other he would lose his balance, so he clung tightly to the side of the door.

"Where are you working now, anyway, old man?" put in Billy, suddenly, much to the disgust of Walebone; but he was equal to the occasion, and paid no attention to the interruption.

"I am a workingman—a hard-handed son of toil!" exclaimed Walebone, with a great deal of dignity, "and despite the bloated aristocracy who thrive on the life-blood of hard-working men like me. But, a workingman has feelings, even if he's trodden on. I love my children, and, Artemisia, in my hours of toil I think of you, and I have determined to make you a present. I am going to buy that coal-box that you now sit on from Dutch John, and give it to

you. For the last three years this eminent fish-merchant, Mr. West, and you have sat on that coal-box nearly every night, and I feel within my soul that you ought to own it."

"I'm very much obliged to you!" exclaimed Billy, quickly, "but, as for me, if I want this here coal-box, I kin buy it for myself without aising any odds from any two-legged man; and if Dutch John don't like my roosting on his old box, all he's got to do is to spit it out, and I'll bet two dollars and a half that if he opens his head to me, there'll be the worst whipped Dutchman round this block that ever was seen."

"Artemisia, it is time for you to retire," said the old man, gravely, paying no attention whatever to the excited fishman. "Your poor father has come home, tired out by his daily toil, and requires you to pull off his boots."

The daughter jumped down from the box and Billy followed her example.

"Good night, Billy," said the girl, offering her hand, in spite of the scowl upon the face of the old man, as he beheld the action.

"Say, Arty, I'm going to speak right out to the old rooster!" exclaimed Billy, in an undertone to the girl.

"Oh, don't, Billy!" she protested, half frightened.

"What's the use of waiting?" the fishman demanded, in remonstrance, and then he walked up to Walebone, who was still gravely stealing himself by the door.

"See here, Mr. Walebone, Arty and me has bin a-keepin' company now for 'bout three years, and I think it's about time that we fixed things. Kin I have her say?"

For a moment the old man glared upon the free-spoken fishman, as though unable to comprehend his meaning, then slowly he raised his hand toward the sky.

"I can't!" he cried, with a wail of anguish. "I can't not give my daughter to this fish-merchant. I could not hold her to this hard-handed workingman's heart, with the odor of salt mackerel and stale porgies fresh upon her. I could not look upon her face—her fresh, young, innocent face—and think that she depended for her daily bread upon a man who skins eels and opens clams for a living. I can't!" and then the old man broke down in a torrent of sobs, much to Billy's disgust and the girl's alarm. "I have set my heart upon her marrying a hard-handed workingman like I am; a man who earns his daily bread by the sweat of his brow. If she should marry you, the very first time you drove your cart through this street and cried 'clams, trout, shillin' a hundred,' my heart would break. Become a workingman, like I am, and she's yours; good-night—Heaven bless you, though you are not a son of toil!"

And then the old hummer staggered in the door, leaving Billy "mad" and Artemisia sorrowful.

CHAPTER XIII. A MYSTERY.

THE cool and self-possessed Business Manager looked at the actress in utter astonishment. He had never seen her excited about anything before. A woman of ice, holding her passions under an iron rule, she was always calm and quiet; but now, with her flashing eyes, quivering lips and burning cheeks, she seemed like another being.

Medham came suddenly to the conclusion that he did not really know the woman, whom but a minute before he had fancied he thoroughly understood.

Medham did not speak; he waited and watched.

For a minute or so the fiery beauty stood quivering with passion in the center of the room; then, suddenly, catching a look at herself in the mirror at the other end of the apartment, a low laugh came from her lips, and with a petulant cry, she sunk back again into the chair from which she had risen.

The bouquet had rolled from her lap to the floor.

Medham rose as if to pick it up, but with a gesture the lady restrained him.

"Let it stay there," she said, listlessly; "sit down and tell me all about this gentleman—what did you call his name?"

Medham laughed.

"Very well played indeed, Miss Desmond," he exclaimed, with a bow of mock politeness; "but you can't humbug me; the pupil must not attempt to deceive the master. You will do me the justice to admit that I have taught you acting; so don't try acting upon me."

Medham resumed his seat, but his quick eyes noticed the contraction of the pupils of the brown-black eyes, and the peculiar lines which appeared about the mouth.

Already the beautiful student clined at the slightest touch of the rein.

"Well, I will not attempt to deceive you," she said. "I do remember the name of the gentleman. Now tell me all about him."

"I suppose he is not a stranger to you, by the surprise my announcement of his name caused," Medham said.

"The name is familiar to me," the girl replied, evasively, "but whether the man is or not, is a question I can not answer until I know something about him. Come, tell now, that's a dear, good fellow!"

"I don't really know a great deal about him," Medham answered. "I was introduced to him last night by one of our managers, who merely said that he was one of the great men of New York, very wealthy, and a great patron of the drama. He's one of the big guns in politics, has been a Judge, I believe; yes, I am sure that one of the gentlemen called him Judge, when we were all drinking champagne together."

"Is he married or single?" asked the actress, abruptly.

"A widower, I think," Medham replied, reflectively. "I remember that Palmer said the Judge had not been to the theater for some time, on account of the death of his wife."

The actress remained silent for quite a long time, while Medham watched the expression upon her features, but he could not read her thoughts; the face was as a blank to even his sharp eyes.

"Has he any children?" she asked, with evident interest.

"No; I heard some one of the party mention that fact and wonder to whom the Judge's immense wealth would descend at his death."

"Now describe him to me," she demanded, in a tone that distinctly betrayed some eagerness.

"He's a man of fifty or thereabouts, I should say, although he shows very few signs of age; not a gray hair visible, if I remember aright; large and portly in form, full face, yellow mustache and hair, and a pair of full blue eyes."

"Is he?" the actress murmured to herself.

"Does the description answer?" the other inquired.

"Yes, I think so, although I have not seen him for years," she made answer.

It was now Medham's turn to look astonished.

"For years, eh?"

"Yes; if it is the same."

"You must have been quite young then."

"Yes; I was a child."

The lip of the actress curled contemptuously as she spoke. Medham could not understand the reason for it. The whole matter was a puzzle to him.

"Now, tell me what he said about me," she demanded, abruptly.

"Very little, to me," Medham replied.

The actress looked disappointed.

"He only said that you were a very talented young lady, and that there was a very bright future in store for you if you persevered in your profession."

"That is what they all say," the "bright particular star" exclaimed in contempt.

"But Palmer told me before I met the Judge that he was very much impressed with you, and had ordered one of the lower boxes to be reserved for him every night during your engagement."

"That is a compliment."

"Yes; not only a compliment, but good hard, solid cash," replied the Business Manager, with an eye to the main chance; "I wish that a half a dozen of your other admirers would do the same thing."

"How much was in the house last night?" the actress asked, abruptly changing the subject.

"Guess!"

"Twelve hundred dollars?"

"The Business Manager whistled.

"My dear, you mustn't imagine that every one that comes in front pays for it."

But the Superintendent and the District Attorney got hold of him, and finally he squealed, and gave the whole thing away.

"Made a clean breast of it, eh?" the captain said, listening intently to the recital as he climbed the stairs after the astute detective.

"Yes, only he either couldn't or wouldn't tell where Dominick was concealed."

"But the woman fixed him!" the captain exclaimed triumphantly.

"Yes, but if Mickey hadn't peached, I should never have thought of a man like Dominick being concerned in such a job as this one."

"It will be something of a feather in your cap to lug Gentlemen George by the heels," said the captain, in a reflective manner.

"You can bet your bottom dollar on that," the detective answered complacently. "It will be the first time that the steel bracelets have ever closed on his delicate wrists. He's been a deuced lucky fellow, but the pitcher, you know, will get broken at last; but here we are!"

The two men halted in front of a door from the transom over which came a dim light.

The hunters had tracked their prey to its lair, but now hesitated to enter. Did they fear that, tiger-like, the human quarry would turn and rend them?

Softly, and with smothered voices, the two had ascended the stairs and stolen along the entry.

"Shall I kick the door in?" Murphy whispered in the ear of the other.

"No, wait."

The detective stooped and applied his ear to the key-hole, but the key being still in the lock prevented him from viewing the interior of the room.

"Curse the key!" muttered the detective, as he rose from his stooping posture; and as he did so, he came in violent contact with Murphy, who had approached quite close to the door.

"Blazes, you've made my nose bleed, I believe!" Murphy growled, ruefully rubbing his nose with his hand.

Slight as had been the noise of the collision, it was plain that it had attracted the attention of some one within, for they could plainly hear the rustle of a woman's dress and a light foot-fall moving toward the door.

"She has discovered us—Dominick's wife, I suppose," the detective whispered.

"Better knock and see if she will open; if not, smash the lock in," Murphy suggested.

The detective gave a thundering rap at the door.

An answer came from within.

"Again the detective beat his door-like knuckles against the panels, but eliciting no response.

"Let me try my foot at it," Murphy said.

"One good kick will smash the lock right in."

The detective stepped aside, and Murphy, bracing himself, dashed his foot violently against the door.

The heavy sole striking just above the lock the door darted wide open as if by magic.

Within the room George Dominick lay, extended on a bed, while Hero, his wife, stood in the center of the apartment, a cocked and leveled revolver in her hand.

Both Murphy and the detective were brave men, used to facing danger in a thousand shapes; but both hesitated when they beheld the woman. There was something in her eyes which said "shoot," as plainly as though the word had been spoken.

Just a second or two the tableau lasted, but Dominick raising his head from the pillow, and catching sight of the detectives, broke the silence.

"Jim Lane, eh?" and then with a look of despair, the wounded man snuck back again on his bed.

"Sorry to trouble you, George, but I've come for you," the detective said, blandly.

"How do you do, Mrs. Dominick?" said Captain Murphy, persuasively. "I haven't had the pleasure of seeing you since your marriage."

Still the woman held the leveled weapon at the point; still the word danger was written on her face.

"I suppose you understand, George, that it is useless to offer any resistance," the detective remarked.

"Yes," with a sullen groan. "Drop your hand, Hero, dear. It's no use making any trouble. I couldn't run even if you winged both of these hawks!"

Murphy looked decidedly uncomfortable at the thought.

"Have you a warrant for her too?" George asked, as Hero quietly let down the hammer of the revolver and thrust the weapon into her pocket.

"No, for you alone," the detective replied.

"We've got you this time; Mickey has given you away."

George ground his teeth together, and a groan came from his lips.

An hour later and the Tombs prison held Gentleman George.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 196.)

NADIA, THE RUSSIAN SPY; OR, The Brothers of the Starry Cross.

BY CAPT. FREDERICK WHITTAKER, AUTHOR OF "THE RED KAZAN," "THE SEA CAT," "THE ROCK RIDER," "DOUBLE-DEATH," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXV. THE CHARGE.

GENERAL CYPRIANOFF sat on his horse at the North Valley, in rear of the great Russian Battery, watching the motions of the enemy, and near the commander-in-chief.

The Light Brigade had just commenced their charge.

"Those fellows come straight, Ivan; but they must swerve before they reach us," said the commander to his General of Artillery.

Cyprianoff watched them keenly before he answered. Then he shut up his glass.

"I think they have made a mistake," he said, quietly. "They have no leader of the other side, or the leader is a fool. They are coming straight toward us."

Then he galloped down to his principal battery and sternly directed its fire on the devoted column. At the same moment from Causeway Ridge and the hills opposite the guns opened, firing in salvoes, six at a time.

And now commenced that terrible drama of death and heroic folly, when twenty thousand men stood at their ease, slaughtering six hundred advancing to attack them in their strongest point.

A white pall of smoke, through which the red flashes of artillery came out every instant, marked the horse-shoe line that embraced those devoted horsemen in a clasp of death.

Cyprianoff sat in his saddle on a hill behind the battery, deep columns of cavalry waiting grimly behind him, smoke veiling the field, nothing but smoke in front, nothing but waiting lines of gray-coated cavalry behind.

Silence in the Russian ranks, silence amid the oncoming English. Nothing but the sharp, snapping reports of the brazen guns in that deadly circle. When the breeze blew aside the smoke at intervals, through the thin haze

you could see the two galloping squadrons of the first line coming on, behind a single figure on a chestnut horse, a figure blazing with gold all over his breast. Then the guns flashed out death once more, and thicker clouds of smoke hid the English.

Cyprianoff set his teeth as he watched.

"They will take the battery," he muttered. "Oh, if I were only in command! Why don't they advance and annihilate the madmen?"

Again the breeze blew aside the smoke.

The devoted squadrons, as steady as ever, were close to the guns.

Cyprianoff noticed that they were each a mere handful now.

He looked at his gunners; they were working like madmen.

He looked behind him; for he heard the thunder of hoofs wheeling about.

In an instant he, too, had wheeled, and was galloping after them, shouting, imploring them to turn back, that the day was their own. It was all in vain. They were not fleeing in fear—but their General had ordered them to fall back, and they were obeying, with all the wooden precision of machines.

Then, even while the retreat was coming to an end, under the hoarse commands of the officers, Cyprianoff heard a loud, fierce shout of joy behind him, and the battery became silent.

Then he knew that the apparently hopeless charge had succeeded thus far. The battery was taken!

A moment later the brilliant figure he had noticed before dashed out of the smoke, all alone and came galloping toward the dense masses of Russian cavalry.

It was, Cardigan himself, the first man in, and all alone.

Cyprianoff drew his sword and dashed forward.

"Surrender, my lord," he cried, in English. "You've done well, but you're surrounded."

For all answer the old car wheeled his horse, just as several Cossacks from the flanks came riding at him.

He did not speak a word, but he galloped back through the battery just as the shouts of a fresh assault announced the arrival of the second English line, what was left of it.

Cyprianoff saw the swaying Russians halt once more. That cavalry had not charged that day. They had stood still to be butchered, under the guidance of a leader as incompetent as Lucan himself, though in a different way.

Then, in little staggering knots, the mad English horsemen came driving through the smoke, and a chance medley fight took place, wherein the desperate horsemen were surrounded and cut down, or made their way out of the fight to the rear, wounded and bleeding.

Cyprianoff himself had just interposed to save the life of an officer who was down, when several Cossacks prepared to spear him, when he heard a loud clamor close by.

Looking there, he perceived a young officer, in the gorgeous uniform of the French Guides, fighting for his life against several enemies. His hat was off, and his black hair was floating in the air in a confusion of clustering curls, while his face was streaked with blood.

"Hold your hands, dogs!" shouted the young General, dashing forward. "Surrender, monsieur, and I will save you."

Then, as the savage-looking Cossacks drew back, the French officer dropped his sword, waved in his saddle, and would have fallen, but for Cyprianoff, who caught him in his arms as he dropped back, senseless.

What was it caused the Russian General to start and utter that sudden cry of terror as he looked in the face of that young officer?

It was the face of a mere boy, dark and handsome, with a downy black mustache and long, curling hair. The blood that covered it could not disguise the regular outline.

But Cyprianoff seemed to recognize that face as something known to him. All the whirl of battle going on round him seemed to fade from his memory as he drew the slight form of the now insensible young officer out of the saddle and carried it off away from the field.

He forgot his duty, forgot every thing round, and galloped away to the rear, out of the din of conflict, till he halted in a little hollow, back of the lines.

Then he looked round for the first time. Still Sergeant Potapoff had pulled up within ten paces, and awaited his commander's orders, like a statue of stolid silence.

CHAPTER XXV. PRINCESS GALLITZIN.

The city of Petersburg was gay with sleighs, the bells ringing in one universal hurra of merriment from the harness of prancing horses, while orderlies and escorts of dragons were galloping to and fro in the streets, following muffled-up officers in long, gray overcoats and high boots, who were spiked helmets, and galloped as if their lives depended upon it, although they were merely on the most ordinary parade duty.

The outer court of the winter palace was crowded with sleighs, for a grand levee was being held to commemorate the great victory of Balaklava, and the czar was said to be in good humor.

In the midst of the crowds that promenade the spacious saloons up-stairs after being presented to the emperor, there was but one couple in which we have any particular interest.

Count Gorloff and the Princess Gallitzin had met as if by chance in the crowd, and the princess had excused herself to her escort, and taken the count's arm.

In the solitude of a great crowd both were conversing eagerly, in low tones, and their conversation ran on this wise:

PRINCESS. Have you discovered any thing, Alexis? I suppose you have or the czar would have kept his word long ago.

GORLOFF. I have discovered nothing.

PRINCESS. Nothing! Great Heavens, do you know the penalty?

GORLOFF. I remember too well—Siberia. But what of that? A man can not do impossibilities. I have done what I could—lied. The czar believes that I know all. I have invented a story to account for the news your husband received.

PRINCESS. And how does he receive the story?

GORLOFF. Believes it. Moreover, I have hit on a way of tapping your prince when he is full of news. I find that he always tells it to the czarévitch; so I have bribed every one round the young fool. In this way I got the first news to the emperor of Balaklava. My spies heard the prince tell the czarévitch; and, oh, Sergio, it was balm to my heart to be able to say to the emperor, "Your majesty's secret service is in full possession of all the news up to yesterday."

PRINCESS. My brave Alexis! I, too, have good news to tell you. I have found where the prince goes.

GORLOFF. Where, where? Speak low.

PRINCESS. To the village of Beloi Gorod, on his own estates. I have followed him myself. He goes into the old church in the village, and remains there several hours, when news has to be got. You remember, Alexis, I told you he was a devil. How else could he get news from a thousand miles off in a deserted old church?

GORLOFF. What do you mean by deserted? Is there another church in the village?

PRINCESS. Surely. This is an old stone building with the roof half gone. The villagers are afraid to go near it at night, because it is surrounded with graves.

GORLOFF. And he goes there? You say you followed him? Did he find you out?

PRINCESS. I can not say, except this. I began to suspect that this mystery was connected with Beloi Gorod, and I resolved to pay a visit there, openly. A week ago I ordered my carriage, and drove thither. The peasants welcomed me with delight, and I began to question them when they had laid seen the prince. But immediately, to my surprise, they all became as dumb as oysters. If it had been you they would have beaten you, Alexis; but a woman has two strings to her bow at all times. I pretended not to notice it, and presently called a little child to me. I gave him a silver rouble, and kissed him, and asked him about his master. The little one artlessly said, "Yes, our lord the prince was here yesterday, and went to the old church to talk to the devil, who always gets into empty churches. And my father told me to keep it secret, or he'd beat me. But you won't let him, will you, princess?"

GORLOFF. Good! You are a jewel, Sergio. Now I will find out something at last. What did you then?

PRINCESS. I sent for the child's father, and frightened him out of his wits. He swore that he would not hurt the child, and entreated me to save him from the anger of the prince, who had promised the knout to any one who should prattle about his visit. I praised them all for their silence, and advised them to keep the secret still, for it had not leaked out of the family yet, I being prince's.

GORLOFF. You did well. Now, I have some news for you. The source of all this news is—Ivan Cyprianoff.

The princess turned deadly pale at the count's words, and looked into his face with a strange expression. The minister of police smiled sardonically.

"You need not fear, Sergio," he said, in a hard, restrained voice. "I shall hurt him, now. Time was when I was jealous enough; but that is all past. I do not fear the boy now. He hates you as much as you once loved him; and you hate him, too. But that is not all. Ivan Cyprianoff has a friend in the camp of the allies, and that friend is a woman."

The princess turned paler and paler.

"Let me sit down," she gasped; "I am not well."

With rapid tact Gorloff escorted her to a seat in one of the deep windows, where the princess seemed for a moment as if she were about to faint. Gorloff covered her from view as he stood beside her, looking down on the throng of equipages in the street, the unheeding crowd in the saloon noticing nothing. Presently she said, faintly:

"Tell me the rest. Who is the woman?"

"An escaped prisoner, Anna Bronk by name," said Gorloff.

The princess looked relieved.

"Anna Bronk? Oh, some German Pole, I suppose. Ivan was always disposed to love the Poles. Who is this Anna Bronk? How did she escape? Was she an exile?"

Gorloff cast a keen glance down at her from between half-closed lids, as if he suspected her ignorance to be feigned; but the princess was obviously sincere.

"Anna Bronk was an exile in the province of Tobolsk," he said. "She escaped into the Kirghiz country, being only under slight surveillance at the time. The Cossack guard caught her, and took her over to the Caucasus, where she again escaped to the Cossacks. Now she has turned up in the allied camp, as a Polish countess, and one of my spies has detected Ivan Cyprianoff in correspondence with her."

The princess set her teeth and her eye flashed.

"She shall go like the other," she said, savagely. "Alexis, if you wish to retain your place, kill me this woman as you did the other. He shall not be happy. I swore it once, when he scorned me, and I will keep my oath."

"Under no circumstances," said the count, shortly. "She shall die."

Then he looked furtively into the crowd around.

"Your husband, where is he?" he asked, in a low tone.

"He has gone to Beloi Gorod," she said.

Gorloff started, and muttered hastily:

"You should have told me before. I am going after him. I shall not trust this business to another any longer. Will you come with me now? There is no time to lose if I would meet him on the way back."

The princess made no sort of objection. She rose and took the minister's arm, and they left the great saloon, passing between ranks of gigantic cuirassiers down the marble staircase, and entering the magnificent sleigh of the princess.

Gorloff dismissed his own equipage with a sign, and they drove rapidly to the Gallitzin palace, where the princess was safely deposited. Then the vehicle conveyed the minister to his own residence, where he dismissed the coachman with a splendid gratuity and entered his private cabinet.

An hour afterward, a small sledge, drawn by a single horse, and containing a greasy-looking Tartar peddler, drove out of the Moscow gate, and took the road toward Beloi Gorod.

The peddler was one of the better class of itinerant merchants who buy their stocks at the great market of the Gostinnoi Dvor, and retail them to the villagers of Great Russia at a profit of five hundred per cent.

This peddler carried a little of every thing, from ribbons to relics of the saints, and wore the high black cap of a Tartar from Astrachan.

Very few people would have recognized, under the bush of straggling hair and beard that almost hid his features, the smooth face of the Minister of Police. But Gorloff it was, on his way to Beloi Gorod, to find out for himself, the mystery of the ruined church.

Before he had gone an hour over the snow-crusted, that sparkled smooth and bright before him, he met a handsome sledge, with three fine horses at the clip.

Prince Gallitzin sat in the rear seat, muffled in furs, and tipped his cap courteously in answer to the profound salute of the pretended merchant.

Then they parted, the prince for Petersburg, Gorloff for the village of Beloi Gorod or "White Town."

The prince did not seem to have recognized the spy.

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Piper McPherson, in his shirt-sleeves, with a short pipe in his mouth, sat on the side of the Woronzoff ravine, with his legs dangling over, while he talked to his old friend Pichot. Both were off duty, and enjoying themselves as only soldiers off duty can, in perfect lazy happiness.

"It is true, mon ami," said Pichot, replying to the Scot. "There is no woman at headquarters. I assure you, I was on guard, and my rounds took me to Polissier's tent, but there was not a sign of a petticoat there. So that you must be mistaken."

"And I tell ye, mon," said Sandy, positively, "that I cannot be mistaken. When I have once clapped my eye on callant or quean, I'd ken them again, gin 'twere twenty year after. I dinna say that the bonny leddy is na gane, noo, but I'll be doin' it—and that's an unco strang word for a dooce body that gangs to kirk reg'lar. Peecho—gin I did na see the vara leddy we had seen much lather to get awa' fra the Turkey-men in Constantinople, sitting in the French General's tent, not three weeks syne, and ne'er a lassie to keep her company."

Pichot shrugged his shoulders.

"Hela, mon ami, I do not doubt it. The pauvre demoiselle she has to make up for the time she was imprisoned by the sarras Turques. It is not our affair."

"Eh, God save us, are ye daft, Peecho?" said Sandy, sharply. "What was an honest woman be doin' in a sojer's tent? Mon, it gars me blaspheme to hear ye gang that gate. Our affair! And wad ye no ye tak' shame to yerself, for reskin' yer life as ye did, to get a light 'o love quean out of the place where she cudna do harm, and pit her in anither, whaur she micht do a world o' mischief?"

"Eh, mon Dieu, what you cry out for like dat, mon brave? How can such a belle demoiselle harm us?"

"Mon, ye canna jist troost a randy quean like her. They'd a muckle deal rather lee than tell the truth, Peecho. Wha kens but what she may be a Rooshian spy, efter a'?"

"Egghon! Baw!" ejaculated Pichot, amazedly. "Why, you are beginning to talk sense at last, mon brave. Wad ye no say it be fore?"

"Because I wasna sure," said the Scot, cautiously; "but I weel say that it's unco suspicious, Peecho, to see a leddy in silks and jewels, around headquarters."

"Well, but, granting all that, mon ami, she is gane."

Sandy turned round to the Zouave with deep meaning.

"Hoo'd ye ken she wadna come back, mon? I mind she was a braw leddy, and ye ken that she giv us two wings, that she said wad preside us gin we gotten prisoners to the Rooshians. Noo, mon, she mair be a great leddy for her rings to be kenne, and gin she was a great leddy, it's unco certain that she's efter nae guide in our lines."

"Mon ami," said Pichot, thoughtfully, "there is reason in yer words, but what are we to do? Shall we go and tell the General of our suspicions?"

"Na, na," said the piper, scornfully. "The Generals are sic high and mighty bodies, they wadna listen to a pair body, gin be didna bring them some real news. But I'll tell ye what, Peecho, gin ye can get leave, the night, you and I'll rin the guard, and jist gang spyin' on oor ain luke-out, round the right of the army. Whiles I canna get it aff my mind that the Rooshians are coomin' in on us fra that side, ane mair, before the winter sets in."

"Mon ami, I will go with thee," said Pichot, simply.

Sandy looked at the sun, which was dipping the lower half of its orb and fast disappearing.

"Gang hame and pit on yer capote," he said, quietly. "We'll need nae arms but the candle steel, for we mair be still as mice. Bring yer bawnet, but leave the auld rifle."

Pichot nodded and ran down the declivity to the camp of his people, while Sandy returned to his tent, and invested himself in his warm jacket and a great coat, for the night was fast growing chilly, in forecast of the coming frost.

He put on his low black bonnet, discarding the lofty feather head-dress, and took for arms dirk and pistol only.

Then he stalked forth into the gathering dusk, just as "retreat" roll-call was over, for he heard the sergeant's harsh voice saying:

"Break ranks—march!"

"Absent frae roll-call, Sandy," he said to himself. "Tha'll be three days' guard for ye, gin the major hasn't got a cauld in his head, so as to tak' Black George's voice for mine when he answers. Ye'd best be awa', mon, or the major will be efter ye."

He threw himself down the side of the ravine, and speedily heard the low voice of Pichot in the dark gully.

"Is it thou, mon Ecosse?"

"Ay, ay, it's me, monseer," said Sandy, dryly. "And I'm thinkin' we'll both catch it to-morrow mornin' gin we dinna feend oot something aboon the enemy."

"Which way are ye going?" whispered the Zouave.

"To the rear, of coorse," said Sandy. "Ye wadna weesh to rin the guard whaur both sides wad be firin' at ye. It's unco slack to the rear."

Without another word the two companions stole off up the ravine, keeping in the bottom, and stooping low to avoid being seen. As night came on, a lively picket firing sprung up about the front of the trenches, and the racket assisted their designs. In a short time they stood in the plain outside of the camp guards, free to pursue their way along the rear of the allied armies.

"Thilucky we have not the Zouaves before us," remarked the French corporal, as they heard the drowsy tones of the sentries around the camp of the Guards, answering each other in the long drawn "All's well."

Sandy bristled up at the implied comparison.

"And why so, monseer?" he asked, sharply.

"Ma foi, we should not hear them," said Pichot, shrugging. "They do not call to one another like those droll Anglais. You would hear but one click, click, and then hallo! Ma foi, it is not so easy to run guard of the Zouaves."

"And how did ye do it, yersel'?"

"Ah, mon, said, I had a friend, Biscard, he is on guard, and he pass me in. To-morrow night I could not get in, for Pierre Bonard is on, and he and I have fought together."

"Aweel," said Sandy, dryly, "gin we dinna get in till to-morrow night, it's my opinion that we'd baith be returned as deserters, and that wadna suit us. Na, na, Peecho, we mair baith be in camp before daylight, or I wad be the waur for us. Now, whist, mon, we're comin' unco close to the pickets. The Cauld-streams are here, round the redoubts."

The comrades had been skirting the rear of the English camps, on the right of the Allied lines, and had passed the last.

Now before them lay the open unknown country, where the enemy were supposed to hold dominion, and the outposts were men of the Coldstream Guards, whose line fronted to

ward the ruins of the little Tartar village of Inkerman.

Sandy advanced very cautiously now. He knew the exact position of the picket line, but he did not know how wide awake the sentries were.

It proved that they were regular John Bulls, drowsy at night.

Pichot, who was crouching to the ground as he stole forward, pulled the piper's sleeve.

"Yonder," he whispered, "is the picket sentry. He is asleep on his musket."

Sandy looked; and, sure enough, there stood a huge Guardsman, with his bear-skin shako looming up against the sky. He was leaning on his musket, and snoring in a way that instantly told the story. The Guardsman was asleep on his post, standing.

Sandy and the Zouave stole swiftly past till they were lost in the darkness, when the piper picked up a clod of turf and stole back several paces.

"Take that, ye sleepy-headed type," he muttered, as he flung the turf at the sleeping sentry. Then he turned and ran.

The next minute the growling voice of big Tom Higgs roared:

"Who threw that clod? Blast ye, I ain't asleep!"

The two comrades laughed as they sped into the darkness. They had run the pickets.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 192.)

Wonderful Instinct of Animals.—Horses have been known to predict a frost by going to a blacksmith's the day before to be re-shod. Franconi tells a story of a mare who would never perform on the stage unless she was on the side of the French. Her spirit of nationalism was such that if she was carrying an Englishman or an Austrian, she would invariably throw him, and then run over to the side of the Emperor. In this way she has often thrown Blücher and the Duke of Wellington. Napoleon, hearing of this extraordinary trait of patriotism in a horse, went expressly to the circus, and having witnessed the fact with his own imperial eyes, offered Franconi a whole regiment of cavalry in exchange for the mare; but the French Ducrow, to his credit let it be said, would not part with her. Napoleon was piqued, but afterwards decorated the mare with the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honor.

Pigs have been taught to spell. A singular anecdote is told of one that indubitably proves the force of early habits in animals generally, but in a pig especially. A learned sow, that was called "Bacon," would always spell Vauxhall with a W. This was always a matter of wonderment, till it was ascertained that she had been born on a market day in Smithfield market. The inveterate misuse of the W at once confirmed her Cockney origin.

Le Vaillant, the African traveler, tells some wonderful stories about the instinct of the beaver. He traveled with one for a long time as a guide. Its name was Snecs. He knew the shops where the best shelter was to be got. Being short of butter once, Snecs brought him a number of cocoa-nuts, which he had thrown about till the milk inside had become churned. He watched by his master's side every night, killing the musketeers and fleas which swam about the lanks of the Nile. He often helped Le Vaillant in unrolling the mummies, and packing his trunks. Le Vaillant brought his baboon to Europe, and Snecs showed his gratitude by saving his master's life. Thieves were plundering the house, when Snecs ran to the alarm-bell, and never ceased pulling it till the inmates were alarmed; the thieves were apprehended just in time, for Le Vaillant says that when he awoke there were two gentlemen at his bedside, one with a pistol, the other with a carving-knife. The day Le Vaillant died, the malicious baboon broke a blacking-bottle—whether accidentally or not is not proved—which blacked him from head to foot, but many persons who knew Snecs well, declare this was done purposely, from a desire of the faithful animal to show respect to the memory of his kind master by going into mourning for him.

The instinct of bears is equally wonderful. There was one at the Zoological Gardens, who would never mount the pole on a Sunday, because on that day no cakes are sold.

A lady of title informed Buffon that she knew a blackbird who looked at the barometer every morning, and would not go out if it pointed to wet. An anecdote told by a German naturalist, of a beaver, is no less wonderful than the above. He declares that he saw a beaver weeping over the crown of an old hat. Soon another beaver approached it, and she cried more piteously than the first; then a number of young beavers, attracted by their sobs, came running up, and they all cried, too. He accounts for this by saying that the hat being made of beaver, the animals had evidently recognized in it the skin of one of their own kindred. "Who can say," he asks, "whether this very hat was not to them the sad remains of an affectionate son—the only remembrance of a favorite brother?"

Captain Parry tells a story of a polar bear, which puts the instinct of this animal beyond all doubt; he had given it to one of his sailors, who, with this small capital, started showman, and having taught the bear to dance, used to take it about the streets. The sailor afterward assured Captain Parry that he could never get the bear to pass a barber's shop, he accounted for this by saying, that as "bear's-grass" was sold only at those places, the animal was in a constant state of fear, lest it should be its fate some day to be sold in six-penny pots.

The sociable grosbeak, a bird which is found about the Cape of Good Hope, displays great ingenuity in building its nest, which is constructed as strongly as possible, so as to keep out the March rains. A Genevese traveler records the fact of finding a whole row of their nests covered over at the roof with bits of an old machintosh, which they had evidently picked up from one of the frequent wrecks off the coast. What but instinct could have told these sociable grosbeaks that machintoshes were waterproof?

Many singular anecdotes are told of the fox. The most probable of those we have read is the one of the fox plundering a hen every morning of its eggs, and leaving a piece of chalk of the same size as an egg, for every one he stole.

The following is amusing, for it proves that the parrot is not so stupid as he is generally represented; Jack Shepard, when he had just escaped from Newgate, heard called out, in a shrill voice, "Does your mother know you're out?" Jack was frightened at first, but recovered his usual courage when he found it was only a parrot that was hanging over a green-grocer's door.

The instinct of the dog, and the cat, and the rat, is so well known that one anecdote, we think, will suffice to illustrate the three. A terrier and a tomcat were pursuing a large rat down the street. The rat was almost caught, when it dodged suddenly and ran into a sausage-shop. The cat and dog stopped convulsively at the door, and looking up at the yards of sausages, hung down their heads, and slunk away quite terror-stricken. The anecdote indubitably shows that self-preservation is the first law of nature, besides proving that the feeling of veneration for the dead is much stronger in animals than in men.

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October was over, and with it the results of Balaklava. The Russians had withdrawn from their conquests, the Allies had assured their position, the din of battle was over, and the siege dragged its weary length along once more.

After the fight, endless disputes as to whom to blame for the blunder. Result, it was laid on the dead, who could not reply. Poor Nolan, whose living tongue might have showed the whole truth, was silent in his grave.

In the trenches before Sebastopol the Highland Brigade lay once more alongside of the Zouaves, and the evening sun lighted up a quiet expanse of white camps. The cannonade was desultory and fitful as usual, and there was no picket firing.

Piper McPherson, in his shirt-sleeves, with a short pipe in his mouth, sat on the side of the Woronzoff ravine, with his legs dangling over, while he talked to his old friend Pichot. Both were off duty, and enjoying themselves as only soldiers off duty can, in perfect lazy happiness.

"It is true, mon ami," said Pichot, replying to the Scot. "There is no woman at headquarters. I assure you, I was on guard, and my rounds took me to Polissier's tent, but there was not a sign of a petticoat there. So that you must be mistaken."

"And I tell ye, mon," said Sandy, positively, "that I cannot be mistaken. When I have once clapped my eye on callant or quean, I'd ken them again, gin 'twere twenty year after. I dinna say that the bonny leddy is na gane, noo, but I'll be doin' it—and that's an unco strang word for a dooce body that gangs to kirk reg'lar. Peecho—gin I did na see the vara leddy we had seen much lather to get awa' fra the Turkey-men in Constantinople, sitting in the French General's tent, not three weeks syne, and ne'er a lassie to keep her company."

Pichot shrugged his shoulders.

"Hela, mon ami, I do not doubt it. The pauvre demoiselle she has to make up for the time she was imprisoned by the sarras Turques. It is not our affair."

"Eh, God save us, are ye daft, Peecho?" said Sandy, sharply. "What was an honest woman be doin' in a sojer's tent? Mon, it gars me blaspheme to hear ye gang that gate. Our affair! And wad ye no ye tak' shame to yerself, for reskin' yer life as ye did, to get a light 'o love quean out of the place where she cudna do harm, and pit her in anither, whaur she micht do a world o' mischief?"

"Eh, mon Dieu, what you cry out for like dat, mon brave? How can such a belle demoiselle harm us?"

"Mon, ye canna jist troost a randy quean like her. They'd a muckle deal rather lee than tell the truth, Peecho. Wha kens but what she may be a Rooshian spy, efter a'?"

"Egghon! Baw!" ejaculated Pichot, amazedly. "Why, you are beginning to talk sense at last, mon brave. Wad ye

IN THE TWILIGHT

A Christmas Reverie.

BY A. F. MORRIS, JR.

And so another twelvemonth thither flies—
Twelve months of life, its pleasures and its sighs;
What ideal perils with the pasting year?
What new ambitions mark the year begun?
False shirms have fallen—'twere the struggle's blast,
Bright scenes have faded, made too bright to last;
Or Hope's young dove still broods within its nest,
While Cupid lights emotion in its breast.
How varied seems our dream this Christmas night,
A vision bright or drear in fancy's flight.
One year of life! Years numbered as the leaves
Back tipped with ripeness—like the husky sheaves
In yellow stalks, gathered all and laid
In totals with the treasures of the past.

Spring grew its buds and hued the earthy green,
Love's May-time festivals received the queen,
Sweet troths were plighted in the moonlit eve,
And crime and quarrel fell from every leaf.
Soft Summer scented the mystic sea,
Its Peris gambled down the ethered lea,
The rosy vintage wore its sunniest smile,
And Nature gently cradled every tide.
Then spiced Autumn crisped athwart the skies,
And froths were welded in hymeneal ties;
Within the heart of the most draught,
Three-fourths had gone, and only joys were quaffed.
How youth has chuckled at the lapse of time,
And basked in the glow of the pastime;
Even sage philosophers heed not its years,
To Science sacrificing age and tears!
Now Christmas winds a record to its end,
And conjures Mankind forth for its friend.

We can not grasp the happiness of yore,
Nor can the dead that died to burn no more;
Fond mates are sleeping 'neath the frozen sod—
What are their dreams to mortals' peace with God?
Three months ago the merry widdow's maid
Derided trial, nor wist of coming care;
Rest all contented in Affection's gold,
Now mourning o'er those hours so strangely cold.
Who dreamed to drink for aye the blissful cup,
And found it scummed in misery at each sup.
Rude enemies have unkenked back again,
And Virtue loathes her banner at the main.
Or mayhap else deceitful worms have grown,
And ruined wretches reap the spawning sown.
None have changed, and none have lost their place,
From sworded hands to deck some other's crest;
Battles are fought, and bloody is their name—
And yet the world jogs on as if the same,
In tears, in follies, merriment or gall,
And man is master thro' the prey of all!

Look back upon the year—its many days—
And count the tollings where the goal repays:
And thus in the mind's eye
Its meads of merriment to reflect
The choice of fable fostering to remove
Each-where, and ponder on the page his own.
Where weary Providence? What mysteries of fate
Have soiled the coat of man and made him beast?
Glutting excesses in Enchantment's arms,
And e'er that others feel the world's charms.
Does a vindictive sorrow prick the breast
Above and more than reptiles like the rest?
Does holiness balm out remorseful throes?
And wipe the blood-tear from another's woes?
Has the heart liberty to pulse and thrill?
Is there a weary thought that bids it still?
Yet, is the galaxy of merriment cold,
Deserving glances poured out fold on fold?

What swift career careered none to repose,
Can balance good outweighed by the close?
Vain may we consecrate this waning day,
And chime the bells and join the lips that pray,
Happily defined, and want no secret,
And e'er that others feel the world's charms.
Does a vindictive sorrow prick the breast
Above and more than reptiles like the rest?
Does holiness balm out remorseful throes?
And wipe the blood-tear from another's woes?
Has the heart liberty to pulse and thrill?
Is there a weary thought that bids it still?
Yet, is the galaxy of merriment cold,
Deserving glances poured out fold on fold?

Still there is that to bid the spirit wake,
And all the star-domes with its music shake,
To plume the serene and barren-painted waste,
Bid fountains flow, and effluvia taste:
Adorn the vista of the mountain's brow,
Waft edens on the scale of future years;
Tired minds abyssing night despair's sad death,
Arouse to vigor in the magic breath,
And souls renew their freshness for the race
That leads to gain, to glory and to grace.
Some pages turn; their ship sails o'er the bar,
Their disappearing pennons lost in air;
Riding the wave and o'er of tempest wind,
Across the crisis of the shoal find
Forever buoyant, and buoyant in steel,
Its grip of muscle rigid at the wheel—
Consort of Virtue, firmness at her side,
Anchored at last in Heaven at Christmas tide!

The milky snow conceal its cloudy sphere,
The sullen murrains of the gloom are near;
Soft sunlight draped the meadow and the mow,
And white dusts wrinkle on the cattle's paw.
Retreating pleasures linger their adieu,
Joy, fresher born, are shyly peering through,
And flowers feed and so, with many a sigh,
Mid cedar, pine and holly, droop and die;
And e'er that others feel the world's charms.
Does a vindictive sorrow prick the breast
Above and more than reptiles like the rest?
Does holiness balm out remorseful throes?
And wipe the blood-tear from another's woes?
Has the heart liberty to pulse and thrill?
Is there a weary thought that bids it still?
Yet, is the galaxy of merriment cold,
Deserving glances poured out fold on fold?

After the gleaming window thro' the night
Buttice the gaze and slant their tapers' light,
The Christmas trees bedecked with toys and sweets,
Surrender to their choir; and laughter greets
The ear on every side, at every turn—
Can all be bliss and merriment and fun?
What wistly famine burn such downy nests,
To mark the fervor of youth's passion-breasts?
What rest? And lo! remoter scenes behold,
Where faces are faint and limbs are cold;
Where shadows o'er a coffin's lid,
Wherein a skeleton how poor lies hid;
The wind a requiem wails in the night,
And sleigh-bells jingle where the dead are laid;
Grims-spectered hunger haunts us hand in hand
With plenteous stores to open at command,
But rather stalk in everlasting shame,
No shepherd there, no savior to proclaim!
Oh! plucked stream, o'er which our bridge of life,
Mirror of love and screen of all its strife!
What thousands in thy channel deep and wide
Will sink, and never see next Christmas-tide!

Flame on thou fathoms of the Borealis' glow,
Vomit thy arches, let thy nymph cars bow—
Torched by the red puls of thy spiral train,
Soot down upon the valley and the mountain,
Thy sheeted heralds of the vast now forth,
Precede the merriment of the night;
Great King of Winter! Now the ice-witch roams,
Darting her meteors round etheral homes,
Scratching her robes of tempest-scurrying snow,
And wraps eternal night o'er realms below.
From star to star her ever-fashing train,
Electric cannons snap and roar again,
While ere the sunset flees the darkling plain,
Old Boreas screeches o'er the frigid main—
Piling his avalanche into Hecla's mouth,
Wrestling fair seasons from the rocky south,
Let sing and hums and whistles o'er awhile,
And tickles mortals with his crispy smile.

Come on, full many a Winter's crown, come on!
Grow fat thy ribs and ray thy restless down
In glinting hail! Bid the frosty wind mad,
Wrinkle thy brow or teach the gay to laugh;
Lash thro' the wild vine's stiff and tawdry stems,
Send the hard earth shivering and tremble;
Drip on and murmur, paint thy white and gray
Twixt every glories shadow at its play;
Before the vernal gleam melts o'er thy furze,
Take thou a second merry year to us here!
Unloose thy portals, show thy measures wide—
Hail! hail, jolly Winter! Hail to Christmas-tide!

"Laurian."

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

"FRANK, are you going to marry Edna Harcourt?"
Mrs. Ernest looked across the tea-table at her brother-in-law.

"No, my dear Louise."
She dropped her fork, with its freight of pickled lobster.

"You're not? Oh, Frank, what a disappointment that is to us all. We were sure we would have Edna, or at least Florence Malden in the family."

Frank helped himself to the strawberry jam.
"I'm sorry, my dear Louise, that I can't accommodate the family with a married boy, however, I will confess I am engaged."

Mrs. Ernest gave a little scream of delight.
"Oh, Frank, are you? You dear old boy! Who is it? I can't imagine who you mean."

A roguish twinkle was in his eyes.
"Nor I either, my dear Louise."
Her countenance fell, and she frowned between the sugar-basin and tea-urn.

"I didn't know you were joking," she said, coolly.

"Nor am I, my dear Louise! Really, I am engaged to—"
He mischievously paused.
"What is her name?" she asked, when curiosity got the better of pique.

"I don't know."
"Don't know!" Mrs. Louise echoed. "Perhaps you can tell me where she lives, then?"
Frank shook his head tantalizingly.

"Honor bright, I couldn't!"
Frowns were collecting on Mrs. Ernest's youthful forehead.

"Well, then, is she pretty? Of course you know that much, having seen her."
"But I never have seen her."

"Never have seen her! Frank, what do you mean?"
He saw tears gleaming on her eyelashes, and he knew he had teased her long enough.

He took an envelope from his pocket, and handed it to her.
"Look at that, Louise, and give me your opinion."

Mrs. Ernest uttered a little exclamation of delight.
"Oh, isn't she lovely! Isn't she sweet! 'Laurian,' it says, under it. What a charming name! Oh, Frank, I never saw such a beautiful girl in my life!"

Surely her genuine admiration would have satisfied the most exacting lover, and Frank looked supremely pleased.

"What you see is all I have ever seen of her. I don't even know whether her name is the one on the card or not. All I do know is, I have fallen in love with her—wherever, whenever, whatever she is; and I have promised myself to find her and marry her."

"I think you men are fools—some of you, sometimes," she answered, handing back the picture. "Where did you get it?"

"I found it, on the sidewalk in Fulton street, a few days ago."
"A married woman, perhaps," she suggested, a little bittingly.

"I doubt it. If so, I'll wait till her husband dies."
"Oh, Frank, aren't you ashamed of yourself?"

But the way Frank folded away his "Laurian," showed he wasn't very ashamed. Then he took his hat, and strode out, while Mrs. Ernest departed to the nursery to inquire into the comfort of baby Louie.

Frank walked leisurely down the village street, unconscious of the blue eyes, and the brown eyes, and the black eyes, that peeped at him from the different latticed windows along the route he had chosen.

He had taken the village by storm—by that, I mean the hearts of the girls who lived in Foreston. It had only been a month since he had run down to his brother Fred's—Louise's husband—for a six weeks' "airing," he called it; really a hard-earned respite from his rush of business—he was a civil engineer.

It was really not to be wondered at that Edna Harcourt and Florence Malden, the village belles, had "fallen in love" with him, for he had many attractions to both win and hold friendship and love; personal beauty, mental attractions, and moral perfections, combined to render Frank Ernest a man whom any girl would do well to marry.

And to think, when he might have had Edna almost for the asking, and a snug little fortune in her hand; or pretty Florence, and a partnership with her father—at least so Louise averred, and the young married ladies usually are posted on such minutiae—this odd Frank had accidentally come across a lady's photograph and actually had fallen in love with it!

Truly, Frank Ernest had begun to love the original of his treasure trove. He was a good physiognomist, and he knew there was sweetness of temper, intelligence and refinement, besides plainly-visible grace of form and feature in this unknown girl. He was romantic, too, and there was a pleasant excitement about his "love-quest" for his girl.

So he walked down the village street, thinking of the unknown, as he always did, little dreaming how soon his quest would begin, how rapidly terminate.

In the post-office the evening New York papers were just in. He always took one, and to-night the very first paragraph that his eyes alighted on was this:

"Ten dollars reward for a photograph marked 'Laurian,' lost two weeks since between Fulton Ferry and the foot of Murray street. Possibly, on board the Fall River steamer, Bristol. Enquire for a week, at room—Grand Central Hotel."

His heart fairly leaped into his throat. A chance at last! At last, after two whole weeks!—to learn something about his fascinating incognita.

We may be assured no grass grew under his feet, for a city bound train ten minutes later took him to New York; and an hour later, the late dusk saw him in "room—Grand Central Hotel," waiting for his innamorata. He had not long to curb his impatience; a gentleman entered and approached him, inquiringly.

Frank handed him the paper and pointed to the advertisement. The gentleman's face lighted up.

"You have my 'LAURIAN'! A thousand dollars could not buy the delight I feel at possessing it again. How can I thank you? You are a gentleman. I can not offer you money. What can I do to serve you, sir?"

Frank handed him the picture, with a wild pang of jealousy.

"How he must love her," he thought. He said:
"Permit me a copy—if I do not presume."
"I shall be too happy—but will you not see the original, my beautiful 'Laurian'?"

A darkness flashed for a second over Frank's eyes as he bowed acceptance. So near! So near!

He followed the gentleman, with fast beating heart, into a tiny adjoining room. The door was thrown open, and there, on a canvas, was the stranger artist's conception of beauty—Laurian!

"It is my masterpiece; it will take hearts by storm, as it has taken yours. Is it not perfect as life, only far more fair?"

"Is it really a fancy picture?"
Frank's voice sounded very strangely to himself; he felt a curious, deathly disappointment creep over him, a grief, a despair, as if some one had died.

"To me she lives, she smiles; to you she is only a fair image."
A fair image! The unconscious words stabbed Frank to the heart's core. And so, his "quest" ended.

But he got over it; and to-day, in Mrs. Louise Ernest's malachite card-basket, on her tiny, inlaid, mosaic center stand, are two cards tied with white ribbon, bearing the names of

FRANK ERNEST,
EDNA HARCOURT.

And a large one tells us it happened six years ago.

And "Laurian" graces Edna's album.

Look not mournfully into the past; it comes not back again. Wisely improve the present; it is thine. Go forth to meet the shadowy future without fear, and with a manly heart.

WILMA WILDE,

The Doctor's Ward:
THE INHERITANCE OF HATE.

BY MRS. JENNIE DAVIS BURTON.

AUTHOR OF "CORAL AND RUB," "ADELPHI ADOPTED," "THE CREOLE WIFE," "STRANGELY WED," "CECIL'S DECEIT," "MADAME DURAND'S PROTECTOR," "THE FALSE WIDOW," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XVII.

A REVELATION.

THE Western avenue mansion was still. Lights were turned down here and there; the jets in the halls were at a brilliant blaze, but in the chambers and in the drawing-rooms there were only softened glows leaving twilight obscurity over all, and deep darkness in the corners. The party for the opera had left an hour before. Erle, who had declined Mr. Richland's invitation so positively, changed his mind with Ethel's solicitation, remained to dine with the family, and made one of the party for the evening.

Wilma was not down at dinner. She was calmed and less weighed upon by her apprehensions after unbarring herself to the kind benefactress who had brought such a change into her old life. It was not like the same life, this to which hers had turned, warmed by tenderest consideration from all about her, no difference marked by word or look between this high, proud family and her lowly station. They had adopted her into their hearts, and the fullest gratitude, the deepest loving respect went out to them in return. Unconscious of the wrong it meant, Erle's handsome face, which had appealed to her tenderest pity, first when it lay blanched and pained upon the pillow, Erle's voice which had been a sweetness in her only that was never carried to another ear, Erle's bold, bright eyes which had looked into hers with a conscious possession of the secret her trembling heart held, a happy light of confidence and rapture of triumph in that knowledge and his own belief that Ethel's bond was loosely worn as his own—Erle, in himself, had been received into that deepest tenderness of the girl's inexperienced heart whose first freshness gone out to him would never be reclaimed, would never turn with the same full faith and sweet trustfulness to any other. That much had been done, and then her knowledge came. Between Ethel and her must lie the misery and the humiliation which that knowledge brought, and she had been the usurper of Ethel's right and Ethel's previous reign.

It was no more than just that some suffering should follow; there is never a wrong however unconsciously or unmeaningly done, but is followed by retribution of some sort for the moral law broken. And her willing, gentle spirit would have borne it all if she might only so avert life suffering from them. Mrs. Richland's words had given her one little gleam of hope that it might be averted still. If his love for her might prove but a passing impulse of an hour—if his disloyalty to Ethel might prove but a wavering indecision which, faced by the test calling for the renewal of his love of six years standing, might fall before it—if he should return to his old allegiance, forgetting her as he had begged of him to do, the unhappiness and disappointment which threatened might be safely passed. Safely passed even for her, for Wilma's best happiness was always found in administering to the joy of others. She might be saddened, grieved, wrung to the heart, but her sweet, yielding spirit would find its own reward in the consciousness of duty well done.

She was to have her endurance put to the test very soon. She was waiting still in Mrs. Richland's room, where Gieley had laid out the ladies' opera cloaks, gloves and fans, when Mrs. Richland came down below and drew her aside out of the maid's hearing.

"Dear child, no need of reproaching yourself further, I hope. I fancy the misunderstanding which must have existed has come to its happiest end for all. If Erle wavered he has found strength to be firm at last. They are the same confessed lovers as before, and they have named the wedding to take place on New Year's Day. Be thankful that it has ended so, Wilma."

"I am, dear Mrs. Richland; I am thankful with all my heart. It is a weight off my mind, and a great relief. Do they look happy as though nothing could come between them now?"

"They will be happy. Two such noble natures, so truly assimilated, can not fail to draw out the very best of mutual affections. Ethel looks it fully, brighter and fairer, more loving and trusting than I have seen her before. Erle is at least resigned. I can not even guess at what has passed between them, but the manner of both might point that a lover's quarrel has just been happily terminated."

Sympathy with Wilma's state of mind prompted her to touch so lightly upon Erle's demeanor—gallant, closely attentive, almost wildly gay it appeared. With her knowledge she might have guessed what never occurred to her—that it was forced gaiety. Our own individuality is so apt to influence our judgment of others, and Mrs. Richland was so accustomed to keeping her soul-life so closely locked under that marble, unchanging exterior that her sympathy had not reached to the despair which turns reckless, and Erle's recklessness was so tempered by that sterling honor which pointed out his course so clearly now, that his last touch of deviating from it had departed.

A little later the party, consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Richland, Ethel and Erle, quit the house. Cicely went down to gossip in the housekeeper's room, and for the first time since her coming there the great house seemed intolerably silent and lonely to Wilma. She went down the staircase presently, into the dimly-lighted drawing-room. She had taken a book with her, but the subdued glow, the shadowy nooks and corners were in better unison with her mind just then, and she dropped into a chair without altering any arrangement of the room. It was a sore heart throbbing within her breast, although she was so truly grateful for the end of her worst apprehensions. She told herself again, sitting there in the dusk, that an impassable gulf must have stretched between Erle and her had been free when they met. All of wide, fair Netherlands, all of the pride of the Erles' and Hetherfords' combined, all of the hopes based upon him and the ambitions nurtured in him, must have come between. For his sake she must have borne her own grief just the same, which was less poignant as it was through her fidelity to Ethel. How long a time had passed she did not know, when the door-bell tinkled through the silent house, and some one was admitted into the brightly lighted hall. Some one's hand was laid upon the door, and a voice, whose cool, even accents she knew, said very distinctly:

"The family are out, I am very well aware, my good fellow. In fact, knowledge of that is my reason for being in. Be kind enough to take my compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Craven Dallas, you understand—to Miss Wilde, and request her to accord me the favor of an immediate interview."

William Thompson had no guard against the doctor's smoothly-decided enunciation, and was moving away unwillingly when Wilma herself appeared upon the scene.

"I am here, you see, Dr. Dallas. You may light the room, William, before you go, if Dr. Dallas will come in."

It was Dr. Dallas' very evident intention to come in. He had deposited his hat and walking stick upon the rack, and his overcoat followed them. He crossed the threshold into the drawing-room, then, sinking his feet deep into the thick, soft carpeting, and throwing himself into a seat with the complacent abandon and approving satisfaction of his surroundings. William Thompson turned on the gas and adjusted the shades, and withdrew, with a backward, dissatisfied glance at Wilma's little figure and the tall, thin form of her guardian. The man was a philosopher and a fatalist in his way, and no bad physiognomist, considering his opportunities.

"I hadn't taken any love to that Dr. Dallas," he reflected, as he went. "It hadn't a good cast to that face of his'n, nor yet a good look in his eye. Show me a man that's forever looking sideways, and forever squinting at you unbeknownst, and I'll show you a villain that's on the straight road to the gallows if he gets his proper deserts. That Dr. Dallas ain't meaning any good to our Miss Wilma, I know. Her guardian, indeed! and if he was any kind of a proper-minded guardian he would give up his pretensions to that same, and leave her to them that'll care more for her in a minute than he'd be apt to do in a week. I don't like his look at her—like a cat gloating over some poor little helpless mouse, and she so unconscious, dear soul! Well, well! what is to be will be, whether it comes to pass or not; and I'll give my head for a football to any one as wants it if that same Dr. Craving Dallas don't make a worry in this house yet with his sneaking in at odd hours, and his being like a lord to us, and so smooth and oily and the-dust-ain't-good-enough-for-me-to-lick when the master and mistress are by in the way of seeming dreadful humble before them. Take my word for it, he'll be the serpent in this delectable Paradise, and while I defy any man to show me one more like him."

It is to be presumed that William Thompson meant delectable, and though his analogy may have been a little obscure, and his construction far drawn, his observations were not so very wide of the mark as they readily might have been, and his sentiments in the main were quite correct.

Wilma sat down facing her guardian, trying to be glad for so much kindly consideration shown by him, as well as she was grateful for all the tenderness of the new, true friends she had found, but that dread with which the doctor's presence always inspired her, interfered sadly with her thankfulness for the favor of this unlooked-for visit.

"How is my dear little girl to-night?" asked the doctor's smooth accents as his shifting gaze wandered away from her into the furthest corners. "Not looking as well, I fancy. A trifle sadder, a trifle more wistful and wan than when I saw her last. A touch of the blue vapors are very unsatisfactory company. Not at all a good state of mind for one so young and so hopeful and so cheerful as you to cherish. Is there less satisfaction in your life here than before? Has the charm of newness worn away and the reflex of neglect already taking place of the favor shown at first? These fair philanthropists have a fashion of backsliding, I'm afraid. I might have told you not to expect too much too long, but what use of poisoning the pleasure for you while it lasted. It is one of my principles, my dear—a praiseworthy principle, is it not?—not to stir up the dregs of bitterness while any of the sweet draught remains at the top. Take the bitter all at once and a fresh cup afterwards if you like, but don't ruin the effects of the two by mixing them. Old philosophy for a physician, perhaps, but none the less sound for that. And so the old life and the new are not cut so wide apart but the loneliness of the one may extend into the other."

"I would not wish them so widely separated that my remembrance of those experiences should not keep me constantly grateful for the great change. You are mistaken in supposing I can have any cause for unhappiness. They all grow more kind, if that be possible, with every day."

"Then there is some other foundation for that sadness. I am not mistaken in regard to that; a very strong affection is seldom mistaken in its intuitions, Wilma. You have found something lacking, then. Some element is lacking to complete your thorough contentment. They are kind, very kind, but they have their gayeties, and your seclusion is infected with loneliness, is that it?"

"Oh, no, indeed! I have no desire for anything more than I receive here; I hope you will believe that. There is not any thing, not the least, I would have changed if I might."

"And that is not like youth and hope. It is only natural you should look forward to more. It is scarcely possible you can be thoroughly content with your slight tenure upon your position here. Made much of just now through the uncertain vagary of a fine lady's whim, the same will take another turn and you will be all the worse off for having been a favorite for a time. The old sequestration and narrow limits and bare discomforts of the old house on the Manchester road, with only Mrs. Gerrit's companionship, will be the less endurable for the glimpse of all that is luxurious and refined."

Wilma made no reply as the doctor paused. His words did not demand one, and her heavy heart grew heavier for such ominous prediction. Coming from him it might mean that it was his intention sooner or later to remove her from this fair, rich mansion which was so freely her home, back to the old bare, forbidding precincts where seventeen dreary years of her life had been passed.

He was watching her as he always watched every thing, furtively. His keen eyes read the weariness in her face, read more closely into her gentle, guileless heart than she had any suspicion of him doing.

"I wonder if any impulsive young lover would take much encouragement from such complete indifference," he mused, "from hidden mournfulness, perhaps, over a loss which she may not be inclined to acknowledge even to herself. Very kind of my good and useful friend, Crayton, to give me an inkling of how matters stood. Very sharp eyes our careless reporter has, and uses them to advantage, which is more than better men always do. Doubtedly sharp and penetrating, and I might question the disinterested kindness which led him to call upon me this afternoon with the result of his observations; I might be a little inclined to keep shy of him but for the devil's recklessness which is taking him to destruction and leaves him no better care than to see all others follow the same easy road. I have always found an advantage in cultivating miscellaneous acquaintances; there is always some good to be got out of every man if you only know how to make him. And really I don't know that I could desire a different state of mind in our little creature of conscience here."

"My dear Wilma," he said aloud, "I am afraid that in comparison with the later interests which have engrossed you, my anxiety for

your happiness may have failed in comparison. I think you can not fully comprehend how entirely I am devoted to you and to your advancement. I told you truly that I had sacrificed my own desires to your welfare. Since that, developments have been reached which point to a different course, one to gratify my hopes as nothing else could, and at the same time to establish you in the place for which nature has fitted you, to which you are entitled by right. I have it in my power to insure your life, from this time forward, in the midst of just such surroundings as these. The power to place you on a footing in every way equal to that enjoyed by these people about. Better than even that—to assure you of your right to a life and a position in the world second to none. I think you have felt it keenly, sometimes, in knowing yourself outcast from all kindred, in doubting your right to the name you bear, in being so utterly a stranger to the secret of your own existence. It was very carefully kept from you. It was kept from all the world, and falsely represented where utter concealment was not possible. It is surely not needful to ask if it is your will to pierce the mists at last."

Wilma heard as it seemed with a sudden stopping of all the blood in her veins. Her heart stood still. She grew faint before she seemed able to breathe again. The secret of her life, the knowledge of the hidden past which had loomed darkly over her, in this man's hands! The intensity of her expectation had its first chill in that. That the secret which he boasted as a power was to come through him struck her quick intuition as having some sorrowful if not wicked depths of history to unfold. Her eyes, chained to his thin, sorrowful, unmoving face, were eagerly and painfully attentive, but her lips formed no words.

"There must be something given in return for so much gained, my dear Wilma," the smooth, low tone continued. "I have been careful to conceal that which my mature judgment assured me was wild, hopeless folly in a man of my age—my long enduring love for you. Little Wilma, you never suspected, I dare say, that the fatherly affection I have evinced for you was more than that; you never supposed that the heart which has not had a near or a dear interest for a score of years could be thrilled and freshened by your sweet, gentle influence—that one seeming so absorbed and so isolated as I, could be loving—faithfully, earnestly, tenderly—*you*. Ah, my child! the best part of what our lives might be is very often hidden. But the necessity for that concealment has changed with me. It will add all this that I have hinted at to your advancement if our interests be identified, and to that end I ask you what I might never dare have asked otherwise, to join your life to mine, Wilma; to be mine, my wife."

He sat as if stunned. Of all words she might have expected to hear from his lips these were the last. Of all men in the world with whom any thought might have linked such a possibility, he was the very last.

"I have taken you by surprise," he proceeded. "I hoped you might have been not wholly unprepared for it; I have tried to convey my loving sentiments in a manner to give you some knowledge of the truth. Think for a moment, Wilma; think of all I tell you this offer of mine means; a place for you high and proud as these Richlands possess, and luxury to surround you myself as your husband, and my first object always devotion to you; think of all that and give me your answer—simply yes or no."

Her eyes, fascinated and horrified, fixed upon his face, had not wavered away. For once his were still holding her as if by a magnetic power. She had rallied far enough to think, however; she had gained the power of speech again.

"It can be nothing but no—no! I am surprised, grieved, but I think—I hope you will not take much care. You mean it as a kindness, and I thank you for that, but I could never have any different answer for you, Dr. Dallas."

"I hope and I think you will reconsider that, Wilma. You do not yet know what all your refusal involves."

"If it means all of the knowledge you say, my answer must still be the same. I can never be any thing more than simply grateful for your kindness. I shall be grieved to know that you are disappointed through me. If it is best for me to know that, secret which you hold, it will come some time in some way. I can not even ask you to tell me. I do ask you, no matter what advancement might come to me, to let it remain untold, and let me remain unknown even to myself if harm should come to any one through the telling."

Matthew Gregory's last words were in her mind, then; Matthew Gregory's stern, abhorrent look as she remembered it, causing her to shrink with a dread of apprehension. If the choice had been put to her then and there, it was most probable she would have chosen to bury all knowledge even from herself forever. But the choice was not to be left with her.

"If only as a duty to myself the matter should be dropped. And there is some one else involved—very deeply involved, it may turn out, unless you choose to shield her. As my wife only you will gain the power to do it. You think a great deal of your friends here, of your Miss Ethel, of Mrs. Richland. Suppose either of them should be threatened with worse trouble and misery than you can well imagine being visited upon them. Suppose the choice is yours to bring degradation and sorrow upon either of them, or to avert such, which should be sacrificed, they or you—supposing yours to be a sacrifice."

"Oh, I hope I may never be the cause of bringing pain to them. I think I could bear anything rather than that. Surely, Dr. Dallas, no past interest of mine can reflect sorrow upon them."

"Something worse than sorrow perhaps," answered the doctor, grimly. "My dear child, human creatures are not born into the world except of human parents, and the sins of the parents may sometimes be brought to recoil upon themselves instead of coming down as heritages to the children. It will not be my fault if it is so in your case, unless you will it differently. You have been told simply that your mother is dead, but I know of my own evidence, gained in person, that your mother lives to-day. She lives. Suppose I tell you more—that you have seen and know her? Suppose I tell you that the discovery of your identity to the public now would mean sorrow, humiliation, disgrace to her, that it would drag her down from a proud height, that it would stamp her life with a misery which all time could not efface? Suppose I tell you that your unknown mother is your benefactress of to-day, Mrs. Richland?"

CHAPTER XVIII.

AT THE OPERA.

THE Opera House was well filled that night. The curtain had just gone down on the first act, and during the stir consequent, the Richland family, fashionably late, entered, and took possession of their own private box. The advent of the Richlands at any time was always the occasion of a flutter of attention and comment. The banker and his wife were a magnetic attraction to those motifs of society that so constantly flutter their admiration about

wealth and beauty. Ethel, belle of two seasons, first, coquette, sweet despoiler of men's hearts, as she had a reputation for being—the world always gives that to those qualities which win irresistibly, forgetting how impossible it must be to respond to the muse—Ethel might have counted her devotees, declared or otherwise, by the dozen, even in that audience. And Ethel, big, blonde, handsome, matching admirably at her side, lent a completing touch to the harmony of the group, whatever his appearance there may have caused in the way of jealous or envious twitches in the minds of not wholly disinterested lookers-on.

A fair, well-matched couple certainly. So thought the complacent, self-satisfied Howard Richland, as he turned from them to bend in a lover-like attention toward his wife. So thought half the people there who had a knowledge of that long-standing engagement, so romantic, so refreshing to meet with in our prosaic age, a child-love grown up with their growth, lasting and to be consummated at a very near date, according to Jenkins' report. If there were rebellion and envy over this expected result in many phases of masculine feeling present, there was also relief in near approach to the anticipated hearts of less fair rivals. For the few to envy her, there were the young Maryhender at her side, there were the many to rejoice at returning allegiance of wavering lovers when convinced of the hopelessness of their later aspirations. It is in no more than ordinary ratio that one acknowledged belle will covet the final conquest of another where a dozen will rejoice over the conquest which removes a formidable rival. Ethel Richland was sure to marry sooner or later from the upper stratum, so as well Erle Hetherville as any other, and the sooner the tender folly of six years standing was merged into the realistic effect of the matrimonial venture, the better chance for those remaining.

Erle himself had come out from that interview in the library with a set resolve at his heart that she should never know how nearly faithless he had proved to her—how his heart was turning at that moment away from her fair bodily presence, from the sweet, still expression her face wore to another face, small, pathetic, wistful, which had grown dearer to him in this short time past than any other one on earth. Ethel had put away the temptation which he had fancied would prove as powerful with her. Nothing remained for him but to accept the renewed offering of her love and faith, nothing but to bring his own allegiance back, if that might be, to the old contented standard.

And though dear little Wilma may care for me, he thought, with a thrill of pain shaking him—does, I know, her sense of duty and right will never let her waver. Her own heart would break before she would permit the slightest distress to Erle. Oh, Wilma, Wilma, my darling—my darling for the last time! The hardest will be to tear out loving thoughts of you, as I must do now.

The musical interlude was brief. The curtain went up on the second act almost before they were fairly seated. Erle's eyes swept the stage, went carelessly over the house and came back to rest upon his companion. Of all the fair young creatures there—and there were many—not one could favorably compare with her. Not one of all those the brilliant blaze of lights shone down upon who might have drawn him from her with one extra thrill of admiration. It would not seem any impossible matter to go wild with love of so fair a face, but there was no enthusiasm, no warmth of thankfulness present with Erle.

She glanced up to meet his steady, earnest eyes, and smiled in return—a glance and a smile which were noted by an occupant of an opposite box. It held two gentlemen, one whose attention was fixed steadily upon the scene acting before him; the other, apparently indifferent to the stage spectacle, had been among those to bow to the late arrivals, and whose careless observation had not wavered from them since. It was the reporter, Crayton.

"Going as I predicted," he thought, gloomily. "They are actually becoming reconciled at this early day; that is, as nearly reconciled as they will be for a time. They will follow the usual routine, and find a complacent sort of enjoyment in it, no doubt, when the honeymoon is once over. He will be rather fond of his peerless fair bride, in spite of the dark-eyed little elf who, according to all the laws of contrast, was given a powerful attraction to him, notwithstanding my own intuition of the meaning of that *tele-a-tele* so well covered by Minerva's shadow in the Richland drawing-room—a *tele-a-tele* which his intense expression and the little one's pallor and agitated stillness afterward invested with a hint of more than ordinary chat. For all that, he will be proud of the fair mistress he will take to Hetherlands; he will share his best affections between her and his dogs and his horses and the thousand and one interests which are inured associations with him. And she will have her best of admirers still here and there, and wherever her dainty presence goes, and will find in the excitement of her fair fashionable life whatever may be lacking at home. It will not be either the best or the happiest lot which might be hers; it is not the one I would choose for her with the purest wish. I may be capable of turning for her happiness. Lord knows, my best hope is for that. I would give the best of the worst that is left of me to turn sorrow of any kind from her, and yet who is to know where this enterprise of mine is taking me? Who knows what it may be threatening her through them? Nothing good, nothing hopeful, nothing which can well bear the light, or that sly old fox of a Bitter Herbs would not be upon the trail. It's no principle of mine to go back when I have started once, and I'll not go back in this. Fair and still and cold and statue-like in her unbroken repose of expression is Mrs. Richland to-night. I wonder if nothing can change the statue. I wonder if the striking similarity Lemoir and myself found in the pictured Rose, who has been dead and buried for seventeen years, will make any greater impression upon my new friend and lavish companion of the evening than a reference to it had upon her. As she glances this way! The play is a tiresome affair and the curtain goes down again with little encouragement in the way of applause, and now is the time."

He touched his companion upon the shoulder. "The latter, who had been sitting half in shadow, looking around, nodded approvingly."

"Upon my word, it is proving rather a novel sensation to find myself in such a place again. I see you are smiling over my absorption in the drama, but it is years since I have been in a theater, remember."

"We have other sights here better worth the seeing to my mind, Captain Bernham. What have you to say for all the dizziness represented here in the way of diamonds and bright eyes, exquisite costumes and fair faces? There is one, two I might say, opposite now. The Richland box, that is, holding the two most famed beauties our twin-cities boast, Madame herself and the younger, her sister-in-law—the sweetest, most bewitching and heart-breaking of all the fair ones gathered here."

"You take me out of my depth when you

speak of fair faces. The Richlands, you say? That name has a familiar sound—pray, where?" He leaned forward into the light. His tall, slender, soldierly form, cut to relief against the drapery at his side. Suddenly his face paled beneath the bronze. A tremor passed over the firm lips shaded by the heavy military mustache. His hand dropped upon Crayton's arm, closed in a crushing grip that made the latter wince with pain. His eyes, dilated, were fixed in unwavering intensity; the whole scene of dazzling brightness, the human sea around, the gallery, the pit, the stage, all were blotted into an unmeaning blank, out of which one face looked forward into his own.

Mrs. Richland, leaning back, the ruby silk lighting with richest effect, her snow-white opera cloak fallen back, diamonds at her throat and on her round white arms, formed a picture well calculated to impress a stranger at first sight. The perfect colorless oval of her face turned into full view, the fine jetty hair dressed high in puffs and braids, the long lashes that had been downcast raising to disclose the wonderful soft dark eyes beneath—that was the sight which fascinated Captain Leigh Bernham's gaze. For one second the dark, fathomless eyes had looked into his; in that one second she had seen the intense eagerness, amazement and incredulity, the powerful agitation reflected in his face; the long lashes dropped and a mist of cobwebby light came between them and his face, held there a second and dropped, but the dark eyes did not again glance that way.

"My dear Bernham, what the dickens may the matter be? I say, captain, you are drawing the notice of the whole house, or a good portion of it, and have succeeded in staring a lady completely out of countenance. Suppose you should look somewhere else for a moment, or throw a little less of dramatic intensity into your gaze. There's a wonderful resemblance, I grant, to that painted face of your miniature as we remarked, if you take the pains to remember, but, since the original of that is dead and buried these seventeen years past, of course there can be no question of any relative connection between the two."

Captain Bernham breathed a deep inspiration and drew back to his former position.

"Who did you say that lady is?" he asked, in a low, level voice. "You are right—the resemblance is striking, startling."

"That is Mrs. Richland, one of our first leaders of the first circle, the envied of all envying; the courted, dattered, idolized wife of the richest banker whose name is on the lips of the avenue. That is her husband's bedside, the acknowledged most fortunate man his wife and sister are the acknowledged most beautiful women in our two cities. They say he never made an unlucky venture in his life, and to be witness to his prosperity would go to show it. Such men usually make a failure in a suitably equalized choice matrimonial, but his is an exceptional case. They have been married for fifteen years—that long ago one might fancy Mrs. Richland would be more than ever the image of the Rose? dead and buried years ago—then—and after fifteen years of that familiarity in the close relation which very often breeds complete indifference they are lover-like and devoted as during the honeymoon. See him now—no, don't look while you are blanched out to that ghastly shade, you positively would make a good personation of the Spirit Avenger in that shape."

Captain Leigh Bernham had looked, however. Had seen the tender solicitude with which Mr. Richland was treating his wife, saw the anxiety come up into the smooth, florid face, the slight stir in the box, one or two leave neighboring places and make their way there. Crayton went among them. He came back after a couple of minutes. Mrs. Richland had been overpowered by the heat, some one had brought her a glass of water and she was quite recovered from her sudden faintness. That formed the body of the observation Crayton had it on his tongue to utter as he went back to his place, but he found no occasion for speaking the words. He found the shadowed seat vacated, Captain Leigh Bernham inconspicuously deserted.

CHAPTER XIX

THE DOCTOR'S ANSWER.

WILMA heard with a deathlike faintness rushing over her.

"Suppose I tell you that your unknown mother is your benefactress of to-day, Mrs. Richland. The words, spoken with not a trace of sentiment or emotion, repeated themselves over and over in her mind. A wave of awe, of dread, chilled and held her still. The doctor's light, steadily cold, triumphant eyes, the doctor's sorrowful, impassive countenance were cruelly forbidding in their unchanging expression. Even the doctor's phlegmatic nature was not proof against the startled, terrified apprehension in the deepening, darkening eyes. Eyes just then, notwithstanding the entire difference of expression, wonderfully like the soft, dark, steady ones which had looked the doctor out of countenance before this.

"Not the only feature she has taken from her mother," thought the doctor in the interval of silence which fell. "The oval of the face is the same, the same cut about the nose and chin, but there the resemblance ceases and is altogether so indefinite it is not wonderful that none of them have ever detected it; and all the rest is a very fair-simile in a little more delicate cast of that face of the miniature which Captain Bernham so kindly left me."

The curved fine lips he watched trembled apart, the pained, wistful eyes were drawn away from him, and in the bewildered way of one waking from a stupor, Wilma murmured: "It is impossible! That could never be even if my mother lived! That could not be!"

But even then in her quivering agitated soul had come the conviction that his words were true! Even then she understood as she never had done before what was that strange fascinating influence which the lady's presence never failed to exert over her—a strangely fascinating influence, so mingled with a contrasting, almost repellent sensation at times when those inscrutable dark eyes had looked upon her, as they had once or twice, with an expression which had half-terrified her then, a sensation which had once sent over her an uncomfortable, undefined feeling that she could not conquer. It came to her that it might mean the depth of sympathy between parent and child, poisoned by that curse which Matthew Gregory asserted was hers before she ever came into life at all, that which must make her an object of dread and aversion to any one upon whom she might find a claim, such a claim as this she knew now his meaning must have been.

"It is a fact rather calculated to take you by surprise at first, one so strange as to well seem incredible I can readily understand. A fact which I am inclined to think might even give Mrs. Richland herself a shock of surprise and incredulity at first. But it is a truth for all that, a truth which, as I said before, may be turned to your advantage in a way to insure your permanent welfare, to give you a station and a name equal to theirs, even the power to avert the worst of what might be brought home

to her, and which could very materially alter her envied and enviable position of the present. Take it all into calm consideration, Wilma. Remember that a favorable answer to my suit will insure all that to you, and the best that can be made of a bad affair to her. There was an old idiosyncrasy which used to run in your former guardian's mind, which took the form of a monotonous chant in some of his flighty moments, and the burden of it was always 'a dead life, a dead life.' You have heard something of the sort, no doubt. Did he ever tell you whose was that dead life?"

"He told me once," said Wilma, her great solemn eyes looking their wonder and awe and dread upon him again, "that mine was a dead life, and told me to pray that I might never be the cause of a living death. I never knew what he meant by it; I pray Heaven that I never shall know."

"Upon my word, you are an exception to the rule of your sex, Wilma. With that much mystery to have fed upon few of womankind would hold back at the chance of piercing their own hidden histories; fewer still would care to resist the allurements of such accompanying fortune as I have hinted at. Yes, yours has been a dead life; you have been dead to your proper identity from the hour of your birth, dead to those who are accountable for your existence for as long a time. And yours is by far too sweet and useful a life to remain so—by far too fair a prospect as it may be made to let an inexperienced girl's sentimental fancy mar the wonderful results which may be brought out of it."

"But I do not understand," said Wilma. "I can not understand how it is possible Mrs. Richland should be my mother—how it can be that I should be lost to my mother and every one, as you say."

"Both matters which I might not find it expedient to explain to you now. There is another part of the affair with which you require to be familiarized at first—the importance of letting me be your guide from this time out, and the result which a refusal on your part except through me. You may, through the truths I can bring to her, send your mother disgraced out from her home, her life away to her right to the Richland name, send her out to such misery, such humiliation as one might readily fancy would prove a death in life to her proud and stubborn heart. That was my old friend Gregory's meaning without a doubt. He knew what the fair, proud, courted Mrs. Richland may not know to this very day—that when she married her present husband she had her husband in the land of the living. A husband and a child by one of those romantic early marriages which bring so many young fools to grief; and she, my dear, little wonder it is of either; by my soul, little wonder it is, I really incline in my heart to spare it to her, but that part must remain with your decision. You know something of what the Richland pride is, my dear; you know how it would be stung to the quick by any such revelation as this, which I have traced for you, not in its darkest and most hopeless aspect at that. I have told you what my affection for you is, Wilma. You will find it more lasting, more truly devoted to your best welfare, more trustworthy than the professions of some younger and more impulsive men might have proved perhaps. A certain friend of mine who is not wholly without an interest in you, gave me a hint of the danger you are in which has rather precipitated this avowal of mine. No need to be secret on that score. It was that odd genius, Crayton, a sharp and observant young fellow, by the way, who for once has succeeded in putting those qualities to account. He called on me at the old place to-day, and while there I chanced to refer to your guardianship of you. He was surprised, and let me know it in the rather assured and not always agreeable manner these wild Bohemians pick up."

"A deuce of a guardian you are, then," he said, with rather more emphasis than elegance. "You ought to be ashamed at owning the trust, I say. That little Wilma Wilde is too trusting and tender a blossom, according to my idea, to be exposed to the rough chance that's before her now. There are girls who wouldn't be in any way hurt by it; in fact, such things go in the common experience of that makes our Girl of the Period, I believe, but that child would break her tender little heart over a case of willful deception which is simply flirtation to the generality of our sort."

"Very naturally I was at a loss, and begged him to explain what danger could possibly menace you."

"The danger of throwing her into daily companionship with that already good as married male flirt, Hetherville," was the reply. "I'll wager you a XX she don't even know of his existence, or if she does, she knows that he is in the strongest terms of her intention of breaking from that long betrothal for sake of her—poor little innocent! He'll not break any thing except her heart, take my word for it. If I were her guardian and had no particular interest in an untimely death or something of that sort, I'd make it a point to set her straight regarding the handsome young villain."

"You may fancy what a start that hint gave me, Wilma. I seemed to see not simply my hopes shattered and your future devastated, but a new complication to make worse this pitiful Richland relation. Suppose if, if the daughter of Mr. Richland's sister to a forgetfulness of the faith which was due from him, there would be the double blow to the Richland pride. Suppose it should be, as Crayton said, if a handsome, heartless young scamp had brought a misery into your life from which you might never fully recover. It pointed out my own course too clearly for me to mistake it, Wilma. My first duty is to you, and my heart is all engaged in that duty. I don't even press the question if there were truth in our report, or not, I only ask you to trust to my affection, to the love which will be the steadfast for being matured, to the judgment which has shown me how you will wish to spare any pain to them. Your answer, Wilma, here and now."

What a contrast to be put vividly before her in asking a choice! Erle Hetherville, having youth and manliness and honor and earnestness all on his side; and this man, crafty, hypocritical, selfish, as her pure mind warned her—was that, designing and subtly treacherous—that a pitiful, meager chance for Dr. Crayton Dallas had he based his hopes upon the impulse she would derive from that contrast?

What a bitter, bitter choice for Wilma, with her young and lately sorely wounded heart to even contemplate then a duty leading her to any relation with that man. His thin, sallow face, and cold, calculating eyes gone back to their shifting habit and furtive scrutiny, his narrow, retreating forehead with the scant sandy hair back at the temples, the whole man repellent and insincere to her glance, no wonder Wilma shrank and shivered and put her hands up over her eyes to shut away the sight of him.

He waited, leaving her the silence which would enable her to take in a full comprehension of all he had been saying, and of the inevitable misery which would result from the further betrayal of his knowledge. The two who had extended their bounty so generously to her, not suspecting what she was to one of them, who had lived in such loving harmony for fifteen years, that their devotion had come to be a standing matter of approving reference in this knowledge must fall with an appalling, terrible force; it must reflect in such bitterness that, if the possibility to cover it over and keep it concealed should remain, there must inevitably be a gaunt skeleton of distrust and doubt bidden away as well. If acknowledged there would come the full horror of all his words presented to her; that fair, stately woman—her mother—would go out into the world with such an agony of humiliation in her proud heart as would make it worse a thousand-fold to face life than death. The silence with the terror of all these thoughts bearing upon her grew oppressive, unendurable.

She dropped her hands and looked at him, some new thought striking her colder and stiller than she had been before.

"My father," she said, her voice low and intense with her strong emotion. "You said he was alive when she married again. Is he alive still?"

Cautious Dr. Dallas checked himself in the ready reply which was upon his tongue. Would not uncertainty here leave her more flexible to his will than a positive knowledge of precisely what danger menaced might do? He answered slowly, after a moment:

"My dear Wilma, who may say? That point, I fancy, is quite as well left at rest. I, for one, would not willingly recommend to an awkward investigation."

What did that mean, she wondered apathetically. That her father really lived, or that the associations connected with his coldly cruel eyes were watching her, he was waiting with that tireless, cold-blooded patience which seemed sure of its prey. That knowledge was like a goad to her despair.

"What assurance have I that all you tell me is truth? What proof have you to offer of it? How am I to know—to know that the—the—love you have professed for me, knowing how impossible it must be that I should give a return, has not led you to work in this way upon my fears?"

"My dear child, it might prove sorry work to intimate any such charge as this of mine without proof. I have had personal evidence, as I informed you. I have a rather remarkable memory, not for faces simply, but also for forms, outlines, gestures and tones. I am not often amiss in connecting any vivid impression I may receive with whatever circumstance may have given rise to it, no matter at how remote a date. Such an impression struck me upon the night of Matthew Gregory's death when I entered his room and saw a strange, veiled lady who was on the point of departing. I watched her glide out, followed by yourself, and I knew then, well as I have known since, that I had seen her under peculiar circumstances at some previous time. The lady was Mrs. Richland, as I discovered with my first sight of her here in her own house. Even your inexperienced eyes must have recognized her again, Wilma."

Wilma's mind. More than once that strange interview at Matthew Gregory's deathbed had occurred to her, but she had put it away with the thought that it was not for her to penetrate the mystery, whatever it might be. Mrs. Richland had never by word or look referred to it, and Wilma had remained as strictly reserved.

"The association of Matthew Gregory gave me an idea sooner than I might otherwise have gained. That recalled an incident of my early practice, seventeen years ago; and, by the way, that very incident formed the beginning of my dear friend's patronage, which only ended with his mortal pilgrimage, and his generous remembrance of me, even then. Seventeen years ago, with the difference of a few weeks later in the season, I was called forty miles out of the city to attend upon an urgent case. Forty miles' journey in snowy December weather, with half the distance to be done by stage, was by no means a small undertaking in those days. That, however, was outweighed in the eyes of the needy, out-of-elbow young physician, hardly established in any practice yet, by the consideration of a dollar in gold for every mile, and five added for every day. I might be detained. Calls were few and far between then, and the offered sum treble the best I might expect by staying at home. To cut it short, I went, and was successful in the delicate task of ushering a new life into the world, a tiny yet perfectly healthy female infant which saw the light first in as wild and desolate a region as might be found forty miles out of our two cities. That task alone was not to earn me my fee, however. I had the additional one of breaking to the mother that the little one had never drawn a breath. I don't defend the morality of it; I simply carried out the instructions some one else would have done had I refused. She took it hardly, poor thing! but in all of the two days I was with her, she kept her face so persistently concealed that I had but one glimpse of its perfect oval, its fine, smooth, marble-white skin, and great black eyes matching the glossy hair streaming over it. It does not need that I should add my patient of that time is the Mrs. Richland of to-day, yourself the child which was taken away from the house before I quitted it. Afterward, when that subsequent occurrence of a death at the old house on the Manchester road took place, I was not deceived with all the rest. I knew and wrung the confession from him, that the dead woman was not the mother of the child brought under Matthew Gregory's roof. That much I would be willing to swear to. More I have discovered, but with that much personal evidence and my firm conviction aside from proof of the identity of you two, you surely can not require asseverations of the power I hold."

He changed his position, leaning forward in his chair, with the slightest yawn behind his hand, followed by a deprecating gesture.

"I am growing late, Wilma. I really must beg of you at last the favor of a final answer."

"Oh, Dr. Dallas, can you not see that I am faint, sick with the surprise and dread of all this? I can not even think. Give me time; let me gain some understanding of these strange things you have been telling me. I can decide nothing in my own mind now."

"So I see," reflected the doctor. "So I see and so I approve. Indeed, I would never offer a premium for any better comprehension on your part. And as for time, my pet, this is the time upon which I hang my best hopes. For ten chances now with her worked into that nervous, bewildered state, there won't be one when she has had time to collect herself. She will certainly see that the disaster of her mother's discovery is inevitable either way, and conclude to save herself. I'll be left, the alternative in that case to take the truth where it is apt to pay the best, and be treated to hush-money or a booting, according to whether our gentleman's pride or irascibility comes uppermost. And in that case the Nevada fortune will most likely remain undisturbed in the possession of its present owner, not at all the result I owe to your cleverness, Captain Leigh

Bernham—not at all the result I hope to see maintained."

He said, at his smoothest and blandest: "My dear child, yield to my decision; trust to my judgment; believe in my earnest affection."

The great, reproachful, mournful eyes were upon him, as though they would read the secret depths of his narrow, conspiring soul.

"I want to understand better what danger can come to my mother except through me," she said. "What object would there be in bringing grief and humiliation to her except the advantage, whatever it may be to me? If I were not for me, Dr. Dallas, would you ever bring this knowledge of yours to work harm to her?"

"How you misjudge me, Wilma! It is your welfare and your wishes which claim first consideration in my thoughts."

"If I were dead—if I really had died when I was a little child, knowing all you now know, would you use that knowledge to her detriment, would it be any gain to you?"

"You are not dead, Wilma. If you were, there would not be the slightest change in the responsibility of Mrs. Richland's position."

With a quick movement, before he could intercept her, she crossed over and rung the bell.

"William will show you out, Dr. Dallas. No wrong was ever righted by adding wrong, and it could never be right for me to marry you with the certainty of never loving. For my own part, I renounce every advantage which might come through your agency out of that sorrowful past. I beg, if you mean what you have said, that your wishes are truly for my happiness, you will believe it may best be assured by sparing her."

He rose up, pale with anger, his furtive eyes glancing behind malice and rage, but he was controlled and courteous in his own only way.

"In that case, my dear child, I must insist upon resuming my active duties of guardianship immediately. I must request your return to your old place; for, if it is your will to renounce your right to surroundings such as these, there can be no object to my sacrifice of your charming presence; in fact, it is more a duty to remove you from these associations. I shall expect to find you in readiness to return to-morrow, Wilma."

There was no time for more words. William Thompson was holding the door wide; he brought with cheerful alacrity, and bowed him out with a better grace than he had exhibited on admitting him.

Wilma sunk back into her chair with the stillness of intense reflection in her face.

"He never would have been true to his promise of sparing her with his own object, whatever it is, weighing against. I am sure that my own sacrifice never would have sufficed, I fear him and dread him, for my own sake and hers. There is no duty, none, to urge me back to that dreadful house and him; and yet it is right that I should stay here, and by my presence, unconscious as it has been, endanger her. If I were buried beyond chance of being found again."

Her brain whirled dizzily as she rose and went up to her room. One idea surged there, filling it to the exclusion of all other thought. If she might only hide away beyond the chance of being ever found; if she might avert the horror of the threatening conveyed in Matthew Gregory's dying words; if she might at least feel herself innocent of any misery visited upon those she loved!

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 154.)

RED ARROW,

THE WOLF DEMON;

The Queen of the Kanawha.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN.

AUTHOR OF "ROCKY MOUNTAIN BOB," "THE MAN FROM TEXAS," "OVERLAND KID," "RED RAZOR," "AGE OF SPADES," "THE HOUSE OF PICK," "BITCHES OF NEW YORK," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXVIII

A TERRIBLE ENCOUNTER.

QUIETLY the Indian chief drew the keen edged scalping-knife from his girdle. Every muscle in his massive frame was nerved for the coming contest.

The little fire, now burnt down to a mass of glowing embers, but faintly lighted up the gloom of the wigwam.

The Medicine Man turned his back to the chief, slowly disengaged himself from the huge blanket wrapped around him, and then held it up in the air.

The blanket concealed the form of the Medicine Man from the eyes of Ke-ne-ha-ha.

Darker and darker grew the gloom. "Is the chief ready to see the Wolf Demon?" asked the Medicine Man, his voice vibrating with a strange accent.

"Yes," replied the Shawnee warrior, slowly and unhesitatingly.

"Ere the heart of the warrior can beat ten, the Wolf Demon will stand before him," chanted the solemn voice of the old Indian.

Then all was silent.

In the stillness, the throbbings of the Indian's heart seemed to his excited fancy to make as big a noise as the footfall of the brown deer falling upon the forest-glade.

More and more dense grew the gloom. The blanket that had concealed the figure of the Medicine Man from the chief dropped to the ground.

The old Indian had disappeared.

In his place stood the terrible form that all living things shrank from.

Face to face with the chief of the Shawnee nation stood the Wolf Demon!

In his paw he held the death-dealing tomahawk, whose edge, even now, was crusted red with Shawnee blood.

The eyeballs of the chief were distended with horror as he looked upon the awful form. But no thought of fear was in the mind of the Shawnee warrior.

For a moment the foemen glared upon each other.

Then, swift as the flash of the lightning, the Wolf Demon leaped upon his destined prey.

The wild war-note of the Shawnee nation burst from the lips of Ke-ne-ha-ha, as he struck desperately at the huge form that sprung so fiercely upon him.

The keen scalping-knife cut deep into the side of the Wolf Demon, but met no flesh in its passage, only hide and hair.

The tomahawk of the unknown being came down upon the head of the chief, but glancing in its course, inflicted only a slight flesh-wound.

The two closed together in mortal conflict.

Alarmed by the war-cry of the chief, the Shawnee warriors came pouring into the wigwam.

In the gloom they could only discover that two dark figures were grappling with each other upon the ground that formed the floor of the lodge, in a furious struggle.

Amazed, the warriors paused. In the darkness they could not tell which of the two dark

forms—interlaced so snake-like together—was friend or foe.

The combatants paid no heed to the entrance of the warriors, so engrossed were they in their terrible struggle.

For a moment the Indians stood like statues, gazing in bewilderment upon the strange scene before them.

Then, actuated by a sudden thought, one of the Shawnees—wiser than his fellows—dashed from the wigwam to the fire that burned near to the lodge of the Medicine Man.

The chief snatched a flaming brand from the fire, and then re-entered the wigwam.

The struggle between the two upon the ground ceased. One had conquered the other. By the light of the burning logs, the amazed Indians looked upon a fearful scene.

In the center of the wigwam, flat upon his back, and with the blood streaming freely from a wound in his temple, lay Ke-ne-ha-ha, the great chief of the Shawnee nation.

Over him, with his foot planted upon his breast, and the blood-stained tomahawk upraised in menace in his hand, was the terrible being that wore the shape of a wolf and the face of a man.

The blood of the warriors congealed within their veins as they looked upon the awful picture.

For a moment the Wolf Demon held his position, with his foot placed in triumph upon the body of the prostrate chief. Then, with a hoarse yell of defiance, he sprang forward upon the warriors gathered in the doorway of the lodge.

With a howl of terror, the Shawnees scattered in fear, tumbling over each other in their fright.

Two quick and powerful strokes of the keen-edged tomahawk, and two more Shawnees were sent to the happy hunting-grounds. From the hunted deer ran the Wolf Demon through the Indian village.

The warriors, recovering a little from their fright, and with the boldness that the sense of overpowering numbers gives, followed in pursuit.

The yells of the Indians rung out shrill on the still night-air.

Increasing in speed at every stride, the Wolf Demon headed for the thicket.

Far in the rear followed the warriors. With a hoarse yell of defiance, the terrible figure gained the shelter of the wood, and disappeared within its shadows.

On the borders of the wood the Indians halted. All the village had been roused by the terrible outcry, and great was the wonder and alarm of the Shawnees when they learned that the terrible Wolf Demon had been in their midst.

After a short consultation, the warriors entered the thicket. But ten paces within the wood all traces of the passage of the Wolf Demon vanished. He had disappeared as utterly as if the earth had opened and swallowed him.

Keen-witted as the Shawnee chiefs were, they never dreamed of examining the oak branches that waved over their heads. They little thought that, even as they paused within the wood, in wonderment and dismay, from his leafy covert in the branches above their heads, the terrible Wolf Demon glared down upon them, and laughed, with fierce joy, when, puzzled and beaten, they took their way in sullen anger back to the Indian village.

The Indians gone, the strange form descended from his perch in the branches of the oak, and, with a rapid but silent tread, stole through the maze of the forest.

While some of the Indians had been pursuing the phantom form, others had given their attention to the wounded chief.

Ke-ne-ha-ha had suffered but little. Two slight cuts on the head, inflicted by the tomahawk of the Wolf Demon—mere flesh wounds—were all the damage he had received.

To his wondering warriors the chief told the story of the interview with the Great Medicine Man, and the sudden appearance of the terrible scourge of the Shawnee nation, the Wolf Demon.

Then, to the horror of the savages, on examining the wigwam, in one corner, covered by a blanket, they found the Great Medicine Man dead!

The terrible tomahawk-cut on his head, and the totem of the Red Arrow carved upon his breast, told of the manner of his death and the deed of the deed.

The Great Medicine Man of the Shawnees had indeed been slain by the Wolf Demon. By a miracle Ke-ne-ha-ha had escaped. It was evidently not fated that he was to die so soon.

Carefully they wiped the blood from the face and garments of the chief and bound up his wounds.

Ke-ne-ha-ha at once called a council of his principal warriors.

By the time the council had assembled, the party that had pursued the Wolf Demon returned and told of their failure to trace the terrible being through the forest.

Calmly the chief addressed the council. He told of the dreadful hand-to-hand encounter that he had had with the white man's devil. Declared that the charm was broken, and that the Wolf Demon no longer was to be feared.

The warriors took heart at the bold address of the great chief.

Then Ke-ne-ha-ha urged the necessity of making an immediate attack upon the white settlements along the Ohio.

In this the chief was supported by every warrior within the council. All were eager for the attack. All thirsted for the blood of the white-skinned.

The council broke up, and earnestly the warriors donned their war-paint in readiness for the coming fight.

It was arranged that the expedition was to start on the morrow, and that Point Pleasant should be the first station attacked.

Girty and Kendrick had been in the council, and on its breaking up, walked slowly along together.

"The chief is terribly in earnest," said Kendrick, as they proceeded onward.

"Yes, there'll be a leaden hail rattling around Point Pleasant soon," responded Girty. "What do you think of this Wolf Demon?"

"Well, I don't exactly know what to think," said Girty, with a puzzled air.

"The chief had a tussle with him."

"Yes, and the warriors saw him when he fled through the village. A huge gray wolf walking erect on its hind legs like a man and with a human face."

"It ain't a spook, 'cos the Indians wouldn't have been able to have seen it."

"No, but what is it?" asked Girty.

"Now you've got me," said Kendrick, with a dubious shake of the head.

"No, or devil, if he ever comes within range of my rifle, I'll wager that I'll drill a hole through him," said Girty, decidedly.

"Well, the chief failed," observed Kendrick. "He said that he struck his knife clean through his side, and yet not a drop of blood was on the blade."

"It's wonderful, to say the least," said Girty.

And then the two entered their wigwam.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

VIRGINIA, in the solitude of the wigwam, full of bitter thoughts, and mourning, silently, over the hard fortune that had befallen her, was surprised by the entrance of a female form.

Looking up in astonishment, she beheld Kate.

A cry of joy came from the lips of the hopeless girl. In Kate she beheld a friend!

A warning gesture from the Kanawha Queen checked Virginia's utterance, and the words of welcome died away upon her lips.

"Be careful, lady," said Kate, warningly; "a loud word to betray to other ears that we know each other, and both of us are lost."

"Oh! it is so hard to keep back the joy that struggles to my lips," murmured Virginia; "your presence here seems like a ray of sunlight beaming full upon the dark pathway through which runs the current of my life. Your face gives me life and hope."

Kate gazed into the upturned face of the fair girl with a mournful smile.

"You are in great danger, lady," she said, slowly.

"Oh, I know that!" cried Virginia, quickly. "I am a prisoner in the hands of the merciless red-men."

"Yes, you are a prisoner in the hands of one who is more merciless than any painted savage that roams the valley of the Ohio. A man whose skin is white but whose heart is red," said Kate, mournfully.

Virginia gazed at Kate in wonder.

In heaven's name, of whom do you speak?" she asked.

"Of one to whom the hungry wolf is a lamb; of one who knows neither fear nor pity. A white Indian; an outcast from his country and his race."

Virginia shuddered at the terrible words.

A renegade?"

"Yes, you are a prisoner in his hands, not the captive of the Shawnees. Far better were it for you if the red Indians held your fate in their hands," Kate said, impressively.

"And the name of this man?"

"Simon Girty."

Virginia's heart sunk within her as the name of the dreaded renegade fell upon her ears.

"Oh, Heaven help me, then!" she murmured, "for I am in terrible peril."

"Yes, you are right," said Kate, quickly; "you are in peril. A miracle alone can save you."

"Where am I?" Virginia asked.

"In the village of Chillicothe."

"Among the Shawnees?"

"Yes, this is the village of their great chief Ke-ne-ha-ha."

"I have heard my father speak of him," Virginia said, thoughtfully. "He bears a deadly hatred to the whites."

"Yes, he has sworn to drive the pale-faces back from the Ohio. Even now the savages are arming and preparing for the fight."

"Then my father and friends will be in danger," cried Virginia.

"What is their danger compared to yours?" asked Kate.

"Yes, that is true," said Virginia, mournfully, "but, for the moment, the thought of their peril made me forget my own helpless situation."

"Have you ever seen this man—Girty?"

"No."

"You do not know then why he has selected you for his victim?"

"No," again Virginia replied.

"Strange," said Kate, thoughtfully. "I can not understand it. He must have some motive in entrapping you from your home and friends and bringing you here."

"I will tell you all the particulars."

Then Virginia told the story of her abduction.

Kate listened attentively.

The story puzzled her. She could not understand the double abduction.

"Have you no suspicion as to who this man is that pretended to rescue you from your first captors, but in reality led you into the hands of the second party?"

"No," Virginia said.

"The false guide was Simon Girty."

Virginia uttered a sharp cry as though she had received a terrible wound.

"For heaven's sake be silent or it will cost us both our lives!" cried Kate, quickly and with great caution.

"I will not offend again," murmured Virginia, the big tears beginning to well slowly from her lustrous brown eyes. "But, I have such a terrible weight pressing upon my heart, I feel that I am utterly lost."

"No, do not despair; there may still be a chance to escape from the toils that surround you."

"Oh! show me some way to escape and I will go down on my knees and thank you!" cried Virginia, earnestly.

"I do not ask that," said Kate, with a mournful expression in her dark eyes.

"But, how is it that you are here in the Indian village? Are you a prisoner, too?" asked Virginia, suddenly.

"No," replied Kate, her eyes seeking the ground.

"I can not understand," said Virginia, in wonder.

"Do you not remember who and what I am?" asked Kate, a tinge of bitterness perceptible in her tones. "Am I not Kate, the Queen of the Kanawha, the daughter of the pale-faced Indian, David Kendrick, the renegade?"

"Yes, yes, I remember now," said Virginia; "I ask your pardon if my question has given you pain. I did not intend or think to wound you."

"Do not fear. I have heard too many bitter speeches in my short life to be galled now by a chance word. I am not to be wounded by a random shot. I am the daughter of a renegade; all the world knows it. It would be useless to deny the truth. I must bear patiently the stain that my birth and my father's deeds have fixed upon me. I can not cast aside the shame that clings to me and through no act of mine. All the world despises me. Is it not enough to make me hate all the world?"

"No," said Virginia, softly, "you are not to blame for the deeds of others. Live so that your life shall be a telling reproof to those who would blame you for the acts of your father. I do not think any the worse of you because you are the daughter of David Kendrick, the renegade. No, I rather pity you. I told you so when first we met in the ravine near Point Pleasant, and I repeat the words, now that I am here a captive in the hands of my enemies."

"Oh, lady, you have the heart of an angel!" cried Kate, earnestly.

"No, I am only a poor weak girl in deadly peril," said Virginia, simply.

"Lady, I will try and save you from the danger that surrounds you!" cried Kate, impulsively.

"You will?" murmured Virginia, her face lighting up with joy.

"Yes; can you guess why I am here?"

"No," Virginia replied, in wonder.

"Am placed here by Girty to watch you."

CHAPTER XXX.

FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

"To watch me?"

"Yes, so that you can not escape from the toils that his cunning has drawn around you."

"And you will break faith with him and save me?" asked Virginia, anxiously.

"Yes."

"Heaven will surely bless you for the act!" cried Virginia, quickly.

"Perhaps I may need that blessing," said Kate, earnestly.

"I am sure that you do not!" exclaimed Virginia, impulsively. "I read in your face that your heart is good and noble, and I am sure that your face does not deceive me."

"I will try and keep faith with you. I have promised one who loves you dearly, that if you were within a hundred miles of the Ohio, neither swamp nor wood, house nor wigwam should hide you from me. I have kept that promise and have found you. But one more task remains for me to do, and that is, to save you from the perils that now surround you, and give you safe and unharmed into his arms."

Virginia listened with wonder to this strange speech.

"One who loves me dearly?"

"Yes, better far, I think, than he does his own life."

"I can not understand," said Virginia, bewildered.

"Is there not some one whom you love? One who holds your plighted faith?" asked Kate.

"There is one," and as Virginia spoke, the tears came slowly into her eyes. Back to her memory came the scene in the ravine. In imagination she felt again the warm, passionate kiss of the man she loved so well; then, an instant after, saw him stretched bleeding and senseless upon the earth at her feet.

"There is one now. You speak of Harvey Winthrop?"

"Yes!" cried Virginia, almost breathlessly.

"He is living?"

"Living?"

Virginia sprang to her feet, her face flushed with joy.

"Oh! I and I have mourned him as one lost to me forever."

"By a happy chance I discovered him in the ravine, helpless. Then I carried him to my cabin and he is there now!"

"Is he wounded dangerously?" Virginia asked, the color forsaking her cheeks as she thought of the illness of her lover.

"No, only a flesh wound," Kate answered. "In a few days he will be well again. He told me that you were his plighted wife, and I promised him that I would find you if you were living and upon the earth. But I little expected, though, to find you a captive in the Shawnee village."

"Can you save me from the terrible danger that surrounds me?" Virginia asked, anxiously.

"At least I can try. Heaven alone knows whether the attempt will be successful or not," replied Kate, earnestly.

"Oh, my heart sinks within me when I think of the many miles that intervene between me and my kindred. I fear I shall never see Point Pleasant again. How can we make our way through the trackless wilderness, the home of the wild beast and the red savage?" Virginia asked, in sorrow.

"Do not fear; to me the wilderness is like an open book. Not a path between here and the Ohio that I do not know as well in the darkness as in the light. Trust to me, and if human aid is of avail you shall be saved."

Then, with a gesture of caution, Kate left the lodge.

CHAPTER XXX.

FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

As Kate left the lodge and turned to the right toward the river, she found herself suddenly confronted by her father, David Kendrick.

There was a peculiar grin upon the face of the renegade as he looked upon his daughter.

"Been in to see the little gal, hey?" he asked.

"Yes," Kate replied.

"Been making a neighborly call, hey? Does the critter know you?"

Kate felt that deception would be useless, so she answered truthfully.

"Yes."

"Where did you ever meet her?"

"At Point Pleasant."

"How does she feel?"

"Badly, of course."

"Well, that's nat'ral," said the renegade, with another grin.

"I should think so."

"I suppose you told her that it would be all right—that the chances were that she would be taken back to the station 'fore long, hey?"

"Yes, I did tell her so," Kate said, puzzled at the odd manner of her father's remarks.

"Now, see how good I am at guessing. I ought to set up to one for a Great Medicine Man," and the renegade laughed, disconcertedly.

Kate cast a searching glance into her father's face, but she found nothing there to aid her in guessing the meaning of his strange conduct.

"Have you any thing else to say to me?" and Kate made a movement as if to pass the renegade and proceed on her course.

"Hold on, gal!" cried Kendrick, hastily. "I've got a heap to say to you. Jist feller me off a piece, whar we'll be out of ear-shot of any skulker, and then I'll talk to you like a Dutch uncle," and again the renegade laughed disconcertedly.

With a mind ill at ease Kate followed her father. His manner boded danger. Yet she could not imagine in what shape that danger would come.

The renegade led the way toward the wood. On the border of the thicket he paused.

Close to where he stood was a fallen tree—a huge sycamore.

"Sit down, gal!" and he indicated with his hand the tree-trunk as he spoke.

Kate obeyed the command.

"Now, jist wait quiet a moment, till I scout round and see if thar is anybody in the timber nigh us."

Then into the thicket he went.

Five minutes' search convinced the renegade that there was no one near. Then he returned to the spot where he had left Kate and took a seat on the tree-trunk by her side.

"Thar, gal, we kin talk here without any danger of any pryin' sucker a-hearin' our talk."

"Have you any thing particular to say that you are so afraid of being overheard?" asked Kate.

"Well, yes," replied Kendrick, after a pause. "I would rather a heap s'ist that only two pair of ears should hear what we're going to say."

"Well, what is it?"

Kate spoke calmly, yet she had a presentiment that a storm was about to burst over her head.

"Gal, you don't play keards of course, but I guess you understand what I mean when I tell you to play with your keards on the table and not under it," said the renegade, significantly.

"No," said Kate, calmly. "I do not understand what you mean."

"Oh, you don't," and the tone of the renegade was clearly one of unbelief. "Shall I speak plainer then?"

"Yes, if you wish me to understand," Kate said, quietly.

Kendrick looked at his daughter in wonder. Her calmness staggered him.

"Well, you are a cool hand. If I wasn't certain of my game now, I should think that, like a green dog, I was barking up the wrong tree. But the trail is too clear for me to be throw'd off."

"What do you mean?" Neither Kate's voice or face showed the least sign of alarm or excitement.

"I must spit it right out, hey?"

"If so, be good. Well, gal, I've got a powerful long pair of ears. I were a-passing back of the wigwam where the little gal is, a few minutes ago, and I heard something that made me want to hear more."

"Indeed?" Kate's face was as impassible as the face of a statue, and her voice as cold as ice.

"So I listened and heard a good deal."

"What did you hear?"

"Bout all you said to the little gal," replied Kendrick, with a grin. "I heard you tell her 'bout the young feller that you saved in the ravine. I s'pose he's the one I saw in your cabin 't'other day, hey?"

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"Yes," Kate replied.

"Well, I thought so when you spoke of him. And then it struck me what a funny idea it was for you to be 'tending and fussing over another gal's feller."

"It is strange, isn't it?" said Kate, with a peculiar look. Her father did not notice the odd look.

"Well, I thought it was; but then, you were always a cranky piece, full of odd notions."

"Then you know that I have promised to rescue the girl from her present dangerous situation?"

"Yes, of course I do," replied Kendrick; "don't I tell you that I heard the whole thing as 'bout talked it over?"

"Do you know why I wish to save the girl from Girty?"

"No, unless you've got the milk of human kindness so strong in your breast that it urges you to save the gal, 'cos she's in a tight place," said the renegade, thoughtfully.

"No, it is not that."

"What then?"

"I love the same man that she does."

"Jerusalem!" cried Kendrick, in wonder. "It is the truth."

"You mean this young feller, Harvey Winthrop?"

"Yes."

"Does he care any thing about you?"

"How can he when he is in love with this girl?"

"Yes, that's true."

"That is the reason that I wish to take her from here."

The renegade looked at Kate in wonder.

"I don't understand," he said, in utter amazement. "You say that you love the feller, and yet you are going to give your rival to him?"

"Oh, how dull you are!" cried Kate, impatiently.

"Well, I may be," said Kendrick, doggedly. "Anyway, I can't make head nor tail out of your words. If you love the young feller and want him, I should think that giving him the girl that he likes better than he does you, was just the way out to get him."

"What will be the fate of the girl if she stays here in the Indian village?"

"Well, I suppose Girty will make a sort of left-handed wife out of her. I believe that's his idea."

THE CARPENTER'S DECLARATION.

BY JOE JOE, JR.

I'm a plane man, Miss Mary Jane,
And you I love the best;
Let me write with a scribbling-awl
The thoughts that leave my chest.
I can't make you my mistress,
Nor this deep love on cell;
Your smile but adz to my desire,
And lifts me up a deal.
I can but look at you and stare
When on my eye you beam;
I look on you but to adore,
My eyes are full of dream.
My heart with saw-row would be filled
If I could see thee close;
Your face it blinds my faithful eye
In which you are house and to.
My heart would be re-joice to know
If in some future day,
Hereafter I could call you mine,
And journey on life's way.
I always build four-story hopes
Of such a partnership;
I'd crown you with a ducat wreath,
And praise you with my lip.
I'm sure I haven't any vice
That I could call my own;
I'd thrust old love right quick
If they'd say I had one.
I have a splendid set of hands
Although they are not handsome;
If they could lead me on through life
I'd lead it with a transom.
Your voice is like saw-sawing awed,
Your teeth are like a saw's;
I'd be a cross-cut to my hopes
If I got hit with those.
Or other carpenter should come
Since this contract's to let,
And underbid me on the job,
And marry you, my pet.
If such a fate should happen me
I'd feel so badly board,
I'd choke myself with hammer beef,
And be completely square;
Or take a carpenter's deadly draught
When no eye was beholding,
And in the earth should let my frame
Forevermore be moulding.

Strange Stories.

ONLY A NAIL.

A RUSSIAN LEGEND.

BY AGILE PENNE.

IVAN, the son of Skibotski, dismounted from his coal-black steed before the house of old Vladimir Minsk in the town of Bender, by the swift current of the Dniester, flowing ever onward toward the Black Sea.

Vladimir Minsk was old and infirm, grasping and cunning, ugly as a Cossack of the Don, and yet the father of the fairest girl in all of Bender.

"Heaven be with you!" cried young Ivan, as old Vladimir Minsk hobbled from his house.

Right cordially the old man returned the greeting, for Ivan, the son of Skibotski, was a man after his own heart; young in years and old in wisdom, crafty and cruel, no man at a bargain could overmatch young Ivan.

"Oh, father Minsk, I come upon business," quoth the youth. "You have a daughter fair as yellow wheat when poured from the sack into the mill; she will need a husband ere long, and I am the man that will take her."

Old Vladimir laughed, cunningly.

"Son Ivan, heaven be praised; I can say naught against thee, but that thy father, worthy Skibotski, did not leave what he should when he left this earth to seek another abode. The man that takes Catherine from me must count down a hundred roubles into my hand."

"Waste not thy breath, for thou hast none to spare!" cried Ivan, fiercely. "The hundred roubles thou shalt have, and each one a good fair coin. Know that my uncle, old Paul Skibotski, the grim merchant of Ismail, has knocked at Peter's gate and left me sole heir to a thousand roubles or more."

Minsk stared in astonishment.

"Look not amazed, thy eyes will not bear much trying," Ivan continued. "To-morrow morn, if the saint forbid me not, I shall ride to Ismail to receive my fortune."

"Good luck go with you!" exclaimed Minsk, seizing the youth by the hand and pressing it warmly. "Come, I'll astrop of brandy, son-in-law, that is to be. We'll drink to thy prosperous journey and a safe escape from robbers on the way."

"I fear not that," Ivan replied, proudly. "Heaven be praised! I can wield my arms as well as any Cossack of the Don or turbaned robber from the coverts of the Carpathian chain; besides, my horse here is wondrous fleet of foot; his sire was a Turkish steed, fresh from the desert."

Then into the house went the two; they pledged each other in stoups of brandy and then raffled the compact.

Catherine was summoned and her destiny made known to her.

She offered no remonstrance, although she hated the greedy and boastful Ivan worse than if he had been a Turk. She knew her father's way; knew, too, that for silver roubles he would have married her to the fiend himself, if Satan had bid high enough.

Ivan departed, and Catherine, when her household duties were fulfilled, and the shades of the night had come, crept from the house and sought counsel of her godmother, an old dame, who lived in a little hut on the outskirts of the town. She was reputed to be a wise woman, as those dames were called who could read the future and predict which grain would grow and which ship escape the peril of wind and wave.

To her godmother Catherine told her trouble, and the dame listened attentively.

"And Ivan will ride to Ismail to-morrow?" she asked.

Catherine nodded assent.

"The way is long, three hundred versts or more; dangerous, too, for wild and fierce robbers lurk within the wood of Novimir, close to the river Pruth; the wise woman said, thoughtfully, 'I will help thee, god-daughter, for Ivan, the son of Skibotski, is a wicked wretch. No longer ago than yesterday he threatened to lay his whip across my old shoulders if I gleaned a few worthless grains in his fields.'"

The old woman rose, and from her cupboard she took a pair of pincers.

"God-daughter, you know the stable where Ivan keeps his black steed?"

"Yes, godmother," Catherine replied.

"Go there to-night, take a measure of food for the horse, put it into his manger, and when he eats, lift up the right fore-foot and with this pair of pincers loosen a nail in the shoe."

"Is that all?" the girl asked, in wonder.

"Yes, my child; the simplest means oftentimes produces the greatest results. You loosen the nail; Ivan's folly and wickedness will do the rest."

Catherine thanked her godmother, took the pincers and hurried home. She took a measure of grain in her apron, and stealing from the house, sought the stable where the black steed pawed with his shodden hoofs.

The girl patted the sleek sides of the beast and poured the grain into the manger. The horse began to eat. The maid lifted up the right forefoot of the animal and with the pin-

cers loosened a nail in the shoe. This done, she hurried away and sought her home. She had perfect faith that the charm would work.

The next morning, Ivan rose betimes and after breaking his fast, furbished up his arms and called for his steed.

The horse was brought, Ivan mounted, and then, as he gathered up the reins, the horse pawed impatiently, and a keen-eyed stable-lad saw the loosened nail.

"Stay a bit, master!" he cried, "till I run for a smith! There is a nail loose."

"The wit is loose in thy head, dolt!" Ivan retorted, angrily. "Dost thou think that I will stay an hour for a bungling smith, when time presses?"

And without more words, Ivan gave the horse his head and galloped on.

A hundred versts he made that day, stopping but once for bite and sup, and at night he rested in a wayside inn.

In the morning, when the horse was brought, the stable-boy told him that a nail was loose in one of the fore-shoes.

"I know it, dull-head!" Ivan replied, and galloped on.

A hundred versts he made, the second day, still the nail held, only loose, nothing more.

And on the third night he rode into Ismail. The fortune left by his uncle he received, and he carefully sewed up the precious roubles in the interior of his saddle. Sure, no robber would think of a common saddle lined with roubles!

On the morning of the fourth day, he mounted his horse and rode away homeward.

Still the warning came where'er he halted: "a nail is loose," still he made reply: "I know it; it will serve."

The night of the fifth day, when he halted, it was only a hundred versts or so from home.

In the morning a new cry met his ears. "Brother, a nail is gone!"

"Let it be; I have but a hundred versts to ride."

"And the others are loose," said a smith in the throng of idlers gathered around the horse, examining the shoe as he spoke.

"And you, I judge, are a smith and wish to take some kopeks from me!" Ivan cried, with a sneer.

"By Saint Peter!" exclaimed the smith, loudly, "I spoke not that, and if you are too poor to pay, I'll fix the shoe and charge thee nothing. 'Twere a shame indeed that such a noble beast should suffer because another brute bestrides him!"

Ivan waited to hear no more, but gave his horse a furious lash and rode away, the jeers of the crowd sounding in his ears.

Through the dark forest of Novimir, over the chosen abode of disbanded soldiers, outlawed Cossacks of the Don, and brigands of every class, the road led.

Once within the arches of the deep wood, and Ivan, the son of Skibotski, trembled and repented that he had not listened to the warning of the smith and allowed the nail to be replaced.

If he was attacked by the outlaws, known to haunt the forest, in the speed of his horse he depended for safety.

As he journeyed onward, murmuring prayers to every saint in the calendar, suddenly, through the arches of the wood, rode a band of fierce and bearded men, bearing glistening weapons in their fists.

The outlaws were at hand, and now flight alone could save the son of Skibotski.

Like an arrow from a bow, springing forward the black descendant of the Arab steeds.

For a hundred yards or so, it seemed as if the dark horse would bear the terrified Russian far beyond harm; but then, with a sudden jerk, the shoe parted from the foot, and the horse fell upon his knees, casting his rider over his head.

Then the wild robbers came up, and they stripped Ivan from head to heel. A few scanty rags they gave him to cover his nakedness, and with switches, lustily applied, drove him through the forest. The black horse and the saddle lined with roubles he never saw again.

In a sorrowful plight, Ivan returned to Bender. No chance was there now of his wedding fair Catherine, and old Minsk was so enraged at the mischance that he took a fit of spleen and died. And so this day, in the province drained by the Dniester, they tell the story of Ivan's mishap.

The Episode of a Night.

BY JENNIE DAVIS BURTON.

"The Ides of March, Raeburn, the Ides of March!"

"What, another?"

"Another."

"And for you?"

"And for me."

"Then receive my most sincere congratulations, my dear fellow, and the assurance you have a treat in store for you." A grave-faced, olive-skinned man of thirty was Raeburn, looking older, and well known to the world of fame. Just now into his deep, earnest eyes crept a quizzical gleam; about his bearded mouth lurked something which might have been the shadow of an amused smile. The other looked at him with a visage growing lengthened and accusing.

"Raeburn!"

"Harley?"

"You brought this about."

"My dear boy—"

"I warn you not to commit yourself. The evidence shall be against you; bench and jury are unanimous in pre-judging you guilty. You, Raeburn, my dearest friend, whom I trusted, loved as a brother, willfully, deliberately, and unpardonably betraying that trust! Where, oh where may incorruptibility be found?"

"You absurd fellow!" Raeburn laughed at the other's serio-comic air. "Suppose I am so countable? If you are not pleased you have the alternative left of declining the invitation."

"And plunge myself into depths of despair, blacker for this brief radiant gleam? Give up my dreams, my hopes, my aspirations? Never, never, never!" The deep dramatic intonation was very well given for an amateur, and Harley Romaine, laughing, threw himself at length upon a couch, elevating his heels to a table with a bachelor's idea of ease. "Seriously, I am your debtor to the bottom of my appreciation, reciprocity of a sympathetic mind."

"I wonder if you ever have a serious thought in your brain, Harley? That flighty head of yours stands in need of ballasting."

"Fortunate, then, that the inflation of supposing my own merits brought me such flattering notice from Pauletta was so speedily crushed. Never mind, Raeburn; I can be emulous, and not envious. Next thing to being at court one's self is to have a friend there, and I can well afford to be delighted at second-hand notice."

Just a week later the two friends went together in answer to the invitation which had given Romaine such unqualified pleasure. It was a gathering of celebrities, among whom he

was proud to rank as the smallest. The guests were all masked, most of them wearing fancy costumes and personating their characters well. Raeburn, knowing them all, singled out one and another, using familiar household names, which gave Harley Romaine's heart a thrill notwithstanding his natural levity, a warmth of enthusiasm which was not quite unmixed with awe at finding himself among men so renowned, and women so highly famed.

Dazzling brilliancy of lights, music pulsing, throbbing, such a perfect chord of harmony that to a soul attuned it was a pain; flowers dispensing subtle fragrance upon the air, an endless pageant passing in review, it was like some wonderful confused dream, or a vivid poem translated to reality.

"But, Pauletta—Pauletta!" whispered Romaine, recovering to his faculties some of their accustomed complacency. "I behold the scene invoked, but where is the *genie* that controls the spell?"

"Pauletta?" The pleasure Raeburn had derived from his friend's freely-expressed delight cooled suddenly. "I have not seen her yet. Here is another of the constellation who may well solace you for the absence of the leading star. Mrs. Loyd, if you will permit me the favor. My friend, of whom you have already heard, Mr. Harley Romaine."

A slight, tall form, in a sibil's robe of black, embroidered with silver turned. A long slim hand touched Romaine's; a singularly clear voice replied to his murmured acknowledgment of the introduction. Voice and touch had a magnetic influence about them.

"Do we ignore characters between ourselves? Very well. It is an 'open sesame' to favor to be Mr. Raeburn's friend, but the author of *Billion* would be sure of it without so unexceptionable a reference. I am right in supposing this new ground to you, Mr. Romaine?"

"And consecrated ground as well. You remind me of my own littleness before such an authority as I think I recognize in Mrs. Loyd."

"See how difficult it is to maintain independence without neutrality! Mr. Raeburn, have you been betraying me?"

"I hope I know my duty better. We of the stern ideal have a qualm over the application of that word."

"Men will keep a secret well. Women vow the same and—tell."

"A cynic who deserves hanging by his own lines. Mr. Romaine, this person taking himself off through fear of a return shot is one of the incorrigibles who scoffs at all authority, who laughs at all opposition."

"*Rira bien, gai rira le dernier*," spoke Raeburn over his shoulder, as he walked away. A vague impression of antipathy between these two struggled into Harley's mind as he felt the slight involuntary clenching of the gloved fingers which now rested within his arm.

"If foam is any thing it is bitter," she said, lightly. "Let us return to *Billion*. The book pleased me, fresh, piquant, and racy enough to warrant the name."

"You are too generous to my maiden effort. I was not mistaken, then; it is you to whom I owe that flattering review which made such popularity as my fragmentary work has gained."

"Mosaic, I should call it. A picture is sometimes an unwritten poem; you attained the rarer result of placing your poems in one melody, sunshiny, summery scene. Regarding myself, you are right. Don't depreciate your work, Mr. Romaine. It is so seldom I can speak candidly and approvingly, that the exceptional occasions are like oases in my desert way. Have you seen all the lions here? I wonder if you are past the awe they inspire?"

"I confess not, at the risk of provoking a smile from you. As you are strong, be merciful."

"We should all stagnate if it were not for the fresh current circulated by just such nothings as you. Have you been the rounds, and are you properly impressed by the enchanted palace?"

"I have not stirred from this spot, and I am watching for the Haroun al Raschid of the scene."

"I venture you will be surprised in this case. Let me act cicerone; I am one of the few who have the freedom of the place, as perhaps you know."

"I know so little of those wonders, remember. Then finding the sequence to a previous remark of hers—"Do you like your work, Mrs. Loyd?"

"In a general sense—yes! All mankind being at war, I like the excitement of the onslaught. My mission is to write reviews and critiques, which give a wide scope for all bitter and sarcastic flings I have the will to bestow. You are not apt to understand the satisfaction of it, which is learned through fewer ups than downs."

"I know how to deal gently, however."

"And might be better for exercising the knowledge more freely. Look; there is your Haroun—a woman—Pauletta!"

Romaine's eyes went in the direction indicated. A lithe, tall, willowy shape, masked, but not otherwise disguised. She was moving on the arm of a black domino, and as he looked was gone. Once more he detected that slight working of Mrs. Loyd's fingers. He may have been fanciful, but it seemed the hardly repressed inclination of a deadly clutch.

"Shall we follow?" she asked, quite distinctly, but in a low voice, so that he involuntarily inclined his head nearer.

"The fitting view has only whetted my curiosity. There is a history, is there not—a hidden tragedy of some sort?"

"A story at least. A marriage in haste repented at leisure; mad infatuation rapidly cooling; distrust, aversion, hatred, and fierce, bitter pride over all; a whisper of a man's faithlessness, a woman's jealousy, a dagger-stroke in the dark—these are the headings of the chapters. Result, not the death that a bold avenger had marked, though it was parried by only a hair's breadth; the husband, Lovario or not, fairly breaks the bond, which is known to be but a semblance; makes good his loss by leaving Pauletta his money, and disappears. For the perfection of this 'lower true tale,' pity there is no finale."

There was a pressure about them just at that—a surge through a doorway momentarily closing the advance. He inclined his head again, thinking she had added something.

"Did you speak?"

"No." It was odd he had such a strong impression of that level voice changed, sibilant, angry, vindictive, yet agitated, also. Another pang; the scene must surely have affected Romaine strangely, but he beheld a black brigand in an alcove, by which they were swept, standing immovable as a Colossus in his niche. The crowd fell back and the way opened just then.

"Will you pardon me for leaving you here for a moment?" asked the sibil, glancing back, a quivering anxiety about her. "I have lost something, a bracelet. No, wait, please; I am familiar with the place and can find it more readily alone."

She was gone instantly. There was a curtain beside him. He lifted it and passed into a passage which single point of light left vaguely obscure. He was relieved to be rid of his companion. Her magnetism was of that kind

which left him shuddering with aversion the moment her immediate influence was removed. With the desire to escape her return he went forward; a turn, a few steps, and a glow of full mellow light met him. This was the music-saloon, a double apartment, an arch, from which heavy sweeping draperies were looped back, dividing it. Where he stood was deep shadow.

Beyond the arch and in that full glow, her mask removed, and her face, circled fair and rapt in a bliss which might have been of heaven, was Pauletta—the wife whose hand had aimed a dagger at her husband's heart. A man's form was there, too—not distinctly visible first but taking one step forward and standing disclosed. It was Raeburn—Raeburn, with his secret written on his face. Man, not worshipping, never looked at woman with that depth of infinite and devoted sadness in his eyes.

With a start Romaine turned his head. Some sense subtler than hearing told him other presence was at his back. Like a shadow man and a shadow woman stood there—the man's gaze fixed on the pair within, the woman's on him. The brigand had left his retreat, Mrs. Loyd had found what she sought—not a bracelet—and neither saw him.

"Now can you doubt?" she asked, in that whispering tone which had been vague to him before. "Can you believe them both any thing but unworthy with that evidence before your eyes?"

"Heaven forgive her freely as I do," fell from the brigand's ashy lips.

"Forgive her?" Such scorn, such malignant hate in her accents! "Forgive her for striking at your life, for the dishonor of a friend, her own perfidy. You may forgive her, but I never shall."

Romaine saw what the other did not, a forward, upward, stealthy movement of her hand. Swift as a flash its meaning came to him, and he flung himself forward in a blind, fierce impulse to oppose her.

He opened his eyes, and presto! all the scene was changed. Surely this was Raeburn's room, surely this was Raeburn himself bearding over him. Was all that had gone before a lotus-dream? It might have been; he was aware of delicious languor, ready to float away again on the invisible stream. The heavy lids falling, raised with another stronger effort of his will, and he was really back from a world of shadows into the world of fact.

"My dear, dear boy!" Raeburn's hearty voice had a solemn sound of thanksgiving.

"It was no dream, then?" asked Romaine, as his eyes fell upon his own wasted, pallid hands lying against the covert.

"No dream. Don't speak and I will tell you. You saved Pauletta's life by almost the cost of your own. That jealous, revengeful, buffed woman plotted long and devilishly. It was she who sowed discord first between Pauletta and her husband; she who, but for you, failing to separate them through life, would have separated them until eternity just as I, mediating between the two, was hopeful of reconciling them. She failed, and she has gone, never to cross the path of one of us, let us hope."

And Raeburn, noble fellow, you?" questioned Harley, remembering the look he had seen in his eyes that night.

Raeburn understood him and turned his face away, very softly answering:

"My reward is in knowing Pauletta's happiness."

Forecastle Yarns.

A Duel with Harpoons.

"A KANAKER is a tough cuss, boys," said Rugsy Taylor, harpooner in the captain's boat, as he sat one night in the fo'k'sel, under the swinging lantern, with the "watch below" clustering about him in various attitudes, all intent upon the yarn, while they chewed "pig-tail," or smoked "nigger-head," the two favorite brands with the crew of the Blubber Hunter.

"You see, they ain't got any notion of right or justice, and my eye! you injure one of 'em and he's goin' to remember it till the last dog is hung, and when his turn comes he'll pay you back."

Jack Davidson was a harpooner in the old Nelson when I was out on my second cruise, in the year '39. A fine chap he was, six feet high, straight as one of the pines of his native Maine, with a heart ez big ez a bushel-basket. Mates, I loved that man and I'd give my life for him any day if it was needful; and he knewed it, too.

"We had three or four Kanakers aboard, and one of them was a harpooner in the first Dickey's boat—a good harpooner, too, for them cusses don't know what it ar to be afraid of any thing."

"Why, blast my eyes and buttons! I've seed that Kanaker—was used to call him Garryowen because we sed he looked like an Irishman—jump from a boat onto a live whale's back and stomp in the iron with his foot. Because, you see, when he got wild for blood, whether whale or human, he didn't care a cuss what the danger was, but he'd just wade in blood up to his knees. I've seed 'im drink a handful, warm from the whale's life. You kin see it wasn't just the best thing in the world to harry a man like that and git him down on you, because he hed the cussiddest mem'ry you ever heerd of."

Jack Davidson was always up to his harks, full of fun, and ef he got a chance to put a joke on one of the boys, he was just the man to do it. One night when the port watch was called, Garryowen didn't come on deck, and Jack crept down to see what was up, and that was the Kanaker asleep on his chest. Jack crawled out ag'in and rigged a purchase, put some of the watch on the fall and then went down and got two half-hitches under Garryowen's arms and snag out to the men to walk away with the fall. They did walk away and up went Garryowen through the scuttle and never stopped till his head struck the block on the foreward. Then he began to curse them in ef he kin. Kanaker took they only laughed and held him that till he was crazy mad. The first Dickey stopped the fun, and they lowered away and the Kanaker shook hisself out of the rope and came to the place where Jack Davidson stood, laughing.

"You do it, eh?" he screamed. "Me war Kanaker—chief! Me killee you, one day!"

"You'd better not try it on, Garryowen," replied Jack, quietly, "or I'll knock all the tat-too out of your hide."

"He could do it, too, for though the Kanaker was quick ez a cat, Jack Davidson could ef he broke his back with ease. I seed the brown devil fingering his knife and sung out to Jack to mind his eye, and then the knife flew out like the sting of a wasp, but Jack gave him a wipe over the muzzle that sent him turnin' back summersets from the 'fore' to the 'main.' We picked him up all bleeding, and took away the knife, and he was put in irons for two days. He cooled down then and made all sorts of promises, and he were let loose, but I knowed he meant mischief and told Jack Davidson to be on his taps or he'd git pepper."

Garryowen did not speak to him, but when they met he'd give one look out of them snaky eyes and pass on. We took at one of the islands for water and the boats all went ashore. I was in the cap'n's boat, pulling number two, and when we went into the boat Jack, old harpooner that he was, took his iron with him. You hardly ever see a harpooner go anywhere without his iron. Garryowen looked up when we passed him, and any man could see the devil in his face. We filled all the casks and sent them aboard, and then they gave us a half-day's liberty, for none of the boys wanted to run, 'cause they knowed the old Nelson was a blasted comfortable ship, and they couldn't change for the better."

"I went with Jack, and we took a stroll up the mountain and got into a bread-fruit grove where it was cool and shady. A shadow fell upon the grass, and I looked up and saw the Kanaker with his harpoon in his hand. He had a Portugee with him, the only man in the ship that would consort with the tattooed thief, and a dirty, mean son of a pirate he was, too. His name was Gaspee, or leastways that's what he called hisself."

"Look ye, Jack Davidson," he said; 'you have insulted my friend, and he demands satisfaction.'"

"Your friend is a nice sort of chap that can't take a joke like a true-hearted sailor," said Jack. "Now, see here; I'm a quiet man, but ef I get any more lip from you or the Kanaker, I'll knock you both into the shape of a slush-lump, in two seconds' time."

"I didn't come to fight with you, Jack," said Gaspee, turning to a sort of sickly yellow, 'but the chief says he has been insulted, and wants to fight you.'"

"That's reasonable and manly," said Jack. "I'll shake hands or fight him, just as he likes, but I warn him and you that ef I take off my jacket, some one is goin' to git kicked."

Garryowen shook his head as Jack stood up and leaned on his harpoon, looking big and strong enough to eat half a dozen sech critters as the Portugee.

"He don't want to fight that way," said Gaspee. "He wants you to take a harpoon and fight him with that."

"No," replied Jack. "I'll fight both of you with my bare hands, ef that will suit, but I won't take a man's life."

Garryowen ran back about ten paces and whirled his harpoon above his head. "It was done so quick that Jack had to fight or die on the spot, and his harpoon went up too. For three minits they stood facing each other, but neither would throw because each feared that, if he missed, the other would run in and harpoon him before he could git back the iron."

"You'd better quit, Garryowen," cried Jack. "I don't seek your life."

"He had hardly spoken, when the Kanaker ran up nearer and threw his iron. Jack dodged, and the sharp steel cut a furrow through his arm. Jack spun half round, and turned again just as the Kanaker drew a heavy knife and rushed in to